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Volume 80, No. 1 **October 2001**

THE SUGAR BULLETIN

Official Bulletin of the American Sugar Cane League of the U.S.A.

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The Sugar Bulletin

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Joe Beaud, Sr. – William S. Patout, III –Turn of Event

There was a nice article in the New Roads - Point Coupee Banner written by Bernard Curet in the September 6th weekly. Mr. Joe celebrated his 90th birthday on August 24, having been born on Sugarland Plantation in 1911. Joe, Sr. was a member of the Board of the League and is also, officially, a Lifetime Honorary Member. He was King of the Sugar Cane Festival and Fair in 1969 and served actively in Farm Bureau, Point Coupee Parish Cattlemen's Association, and other civic and social organizations.

Mr. Joe, it's good to see you are still going strong. I miss your stop(s) on the way to Grand Isle when you would leave fresh corn and potatoes for the staff at the League. I want to wish you many more healthy birthdays, and we all know that you will continue to do your best to help Joe, Jr. be a good cane farmer! Happy 90th Birthday.

William S "Billy" Patout, III

On September 11, 2001, Billy Patout announced his retirement from M.A. Patout & Son, Ltd., after 27 years of leadership with the company. Billy, while no quiet child (as my father on many occasions described me), was an aggressive and forward looking "mill" man. He grew Enterprise mill to the largest of all of the Louisiana processing facilities and, likewise, grew the company to a three mill operation with much land holdings. Billy served as President and C.E.O., was on the Board of the League serving a term as Chairman, was King of the Sugar Cane Fair and Festival, and has a wonderful family. To Susan, Good luck with your new "ward." Billy, I hope retirement is good to you and that you have many more healthy years. We may have differed in opinion on occasions, but I still respected your opinion . . even, as noted earlier, if we didn't agree!

Seriously, you and your company have been an important part of the Louisiana sugarcane industry, and I have much respect for both! Again, best wishes.

Turn of Event

The week of September 11th will be one that we will all remember for the rest of our lives. It has been likened to the Pearl Harbor of my father and mother's generation. I guess for me, the President Kennedy assassination and the Cuban missile crisis are the other events that have etched a place in my memory and will never go away. As stated so often in this past week, almost everyone can remember where they were when they "heard" the news on each of these occasions. The events of September 11th have, and will drive the destiny of this great nation. Our leaders are under great pressure to avenge the wrongdoing that has occurred. I am hopeful that our leaders will use good judgment as they proceed to clean up this problem of terrorism. Particularly, terrorism against innocent men, women, and children of all nationalities and races. The expression to "temper action with wisdom" comes to mind at this time, and it is my hope that our leaders will do just that.

The "turn of events" that did occur has affected all action in Washington. It goes without saying that such things as a patient's bill of rights, airline passenger bill of rights, prescription drugs for senior citizens, the farm bill, and even the concerns for social security's stability and a balanced budget all fall to the back burners. It never ceases to amaze me of how any single event can change the entire focus of a nation or, for that matter, the entire world. At such a time, we as a people of this great nation need to come together. To put

(Continued on page 4)

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP

Entergy appreciates the efforts of the American Sugar Cane League, and the farmers and landowners in their efforts to modify sugar cane burning practices near Entergy's electrical power lines and substations.

The Industry's Best Practices and Burn Certifications guidelines will assist Entergy in providing reliable electrical service to the area's residential, commercial and industrial customers.

Entergy wishes the farmers, landowners and processing plants a safe and successful 2001 harvest season.

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Update – Events In Mexico May Impact Trade Discussions Payment-In-Kind (PIK) Program Details Released – Stuffed Molasses USDA WASDE September Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released TRQ Announced

At the time of this writing, the House of Representatives was scheduled to consider the new farm bill. The main provisions of the sugar section were reported in the last issue of the Sugar Bulletin.

Indications are that the bill will come to the floor under an open rule, but the House leadership's support for the farm bill package could help the bill managers fight off most significant changes. House ag leaders, however, were concerned that the package could unravel if an amendment by Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), purportedly shifting $2-3 billion per year out of farm programs and into conservation programs, is approved.

The House leadership's decision to support the farm bill was based, in part, on its determination that farm bill approval would be an important element in building agricultural support for Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), a key legislative objective of the Bush Administration. This linkage is interesting in that Chairman Larry Combest (R-TX) withdrew his support for TPA before the August recess, following the Administration's decision to report emergency relief payments to farmers as "amber box" support under the World Trade Organization (WTO) guidelines. Further, the Administration has indicated that the Combest farm bill could exceed these WTO proscribed limits on subsidies.

While we can anticipate another assault on the sugar provisions by Representatives Dan Miller (R-FL) and George Miller (D-CA) during the floor debate, a strong lobbying effort by the sugar industry should prove sufficient to block any attempt to reduce the Federal commitment to the US sugar growers.

Senate action on its version of the farm bill remains uncertain, with Agriculture Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) indicating that a bill could be ready for committee action in October and ranking Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) suggesting that the farm bill may be delayed until next year. Clearly, the Democrats thin majority in the Senate, the diverse membership of the Senate agriculture committee and the politics surrounding the budget debate will make it difficult to put together a consensus bill, unless Harkin and Lugar can develop a bipartisan bill with enough votes to pass the Senate.

Events In Mexico May Impact Trade Discussions

Following the privatization of 27 mills in Mexico, US and Mexican trade officials continue to seek resolution of the dispute over the applicability of the side letters to NAFTA limiting sugar imports through 2008. Private sector meetings between the US Sugar Industry's Mexican Task Force and Mexican Economic Minister Luis Derbez were held in Washington, DC on September 5th. Task force members include Jackie Theriot, Don Carson (Flo-Sun), Jim Horvath (American Crystal) and Ray Van Driessche, President of the American Sugar Beet Growers Association

Payment-In-Kind (PIK) Program Details Released

USDA has released a fact sheet on the 2001 sugar PIK program announced in the Federal Register at the beginning of September. The program will be limited to 200,000 tons of CCC

held sugar, to be released through a competitive offer process that ranks eligible offers based on the per acre offered amount as a percentage of the per acre bid cap. A full description of the program can be found on the USDA website at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Stuffed Molasses

The US Court of Appeals in late August unanimously reversed an earlier US Court of International Trade ruling that allowed duty-free status for stuffed molasses. The Court of Appeals determined that the molasses, added to dumped Brazilian sugar, following the initial stages of refining was a "foreign substance," clearing the way for Customs to classify stuffed molasses in a subheading of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule that would be subject to the tariff-rate quota. The company involved has 45 days (from August 30) to appeal the Court's decision but could opt, instead, to take the case to the WTO.

We continue to work with Senators John Breaux and Larry Craig to develop support for S. 753, a bill to provide US Customs with authority to prevent circumvention of the Sugar TRQ without the need for lengthy regulatory or legislative processes. While the Court's decision could put a stop to the stuffed molasses imports, legislation is needed to prevent others from concocting similar recipes for circumventing the TRQ.

USDA WASDE September Report Released

The USDA released its September World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2001/2002 decreased 60,000 tons, raw value, due to lower forecast sugarcane area for harvest in Louisiana. For 2000/01, beet sugar production is increased 50,000 tons, raw value, while no change was anticipated in 2001/02 beet production. Cane sugar production for 2001/02 was decreased slightly from 4,255,000 to 4,195,000 tons, raw value.

Total use for 2001/02 is unchanged from August. The estimated 2000/01 end of season stocks-to-use ratio is 19.8 percent, up from 18.7 percent in August, due in part to an 100,000 ton increase in ending stocks from August.

TRQ Announced

Note that imports of sugar from suga syrups under USHTS 1702904000 were decreased 95,000 tons in the WASDE due to ar U.S. Appeals Court ruling that is expected to reclassify the product. The 2001/02 TRQ for raw sugar was recently announced at 1,254,983 metric tons raw value, effectively the WTO minimum level of 1,117,195 metric tons plus 137,788 metric tons required for Mexico under the NAFTA agreement.

Up Front With the League

(continued from page 1)

aside our differences; particularly, our petty differences of race, gender, and other idiosyncrasies, and realize that we are all in this one world, together. This one nation appears to be coming together because of this heinous act. I can only hope that the effort to stay as one will linger for some time to come.

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ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Planting – Uncovered Cane – Harvest Starts – Personal Note

At the writing of this article, with a little over 60 percent of planting completed, most of the mills have pushed back their starting dates by about a week. There are few growers who have completed their plantings and there are a few who are just getting started with their plantings. Many fallow fields are now very grassy, and growers are reminded to not rush into planting just to get acres of cane planted. The quality of the planting job is reflected for the life of a field. Planting ratios are continuing to increase. In fields which have been planted by hand, growers are reporting planting ratios as high as twelve to one. Mechanical whole stalk planting ratios are reported at six to one, and billet planting ratios are reported at four and one half to one. Because of the amount of lodged cane, many more acres will be planted with billeted seed. Many growers who have never planted billeted seed and who had not intended to plant billeted seed, are indicating that as much as 20 percent of their planting will be planted with seed which is harvested with a combine.

Uncovered Cane

It has been the industry's experience that where growers have covered LCP 85-384 with too much soil, the stands of plant cane have been somewhat weak. For that reason, most growers do not cover LCP 85-384 with more than three inches of soil. When cane is planted mechanically, whether the seed is whole-stalk or combine harvested, there are areas in the furrow where excessive amounts of seed are planted. These piles, or bundles, of cane do not cover well. Many growers are using some type of scraper/leveler to keep a constant amount of soil on top of the planted cane. As a result, many areas which have the excessive amount of seed receive less than the desired amount of soil coverage. With the heavy rains of the past weeks, much of the soil has been washed from the tops of rows into the middles. Without enough soil covering them, both whole-stalk and the longer billeted seed is now curling up. The exposed cane is not a large portion of the seed planted. However, it does make the planting job look shoddy. When asked for their suggestions, the League's two agronomists, Herman Waguespack, Jr. and Windell Jackson, have advised growers to not re-cover the cane. They have advised growers to sink the middles to establish drainage, and then after the cane has made as full of a stand as possible, soil should be added for winter protection.

Due to the suddenness of the rains, several growers were caught with fields of cane uncovered. Many fields have remained uncovered for at least two weeks or more. Before covering these fields, growers should look at each field to see how much of the cane has germinated. If there are many green shoots showing, do not cover the cane as would normally be done. Only a light layer of very loose soil should be used to cover the cane. Do not cover with any slugs of soil. The small shoots of cane can break easily. Herman suggests, "by running a set of rolling-cultivators on the sides of the open furrow a small amount of loose soil could be placed on the seed cane." Growers are again advised to establish drainage and then, after the cane has made as full of a stand as possible, add soil to the top of the row for winter protection.

LCP 85-384 does not over winter well under water logged conditions. There have been reports of stand failures in areas where the variety went through the winter with "wet feet." If this winter is as wet as the summer has been, growers will do well to make every effort to

keep both plant-cane fields and harvested fields drained.

Harvest starts

With the start of harvest at hand, a number of mills and growers have been running sucrose samples. Many of these Polado-treated, hand-harvested samples are indicating TRS's above two hundred pounds. The difference between hand harvested samples, and cane harvested and delivered to the mill, is normally about twenty to thirty pounds. With harvest beginning this early, starting in the 180's is not a bad start. The rains also disrupted the scheduling of Polado applications and some application dates were missed. Growers are urged to continue with their scheduled applications.

As harvest starts, you are reminded of the precautions that should be taken when burning cane, whether standing or on the heap. Growers should follow all of the guidelines which were presented in the "burn school." Also, with the promise from the State Police that **they will enforce laws prohibiting mud and trash on highways**, every effort should be made to keep as much mud off roads as possible. Every effort should be made to be a good neighbor.

Personal note

The author would like to end this article with a personal note. It has been a learning experience and pleasure to work with Dr. Charley Richard for the last twenty-seven years. We went on way too many bus trips to recount all of the good times and all of the things that we learned. I had the privilege of watching Charley grow from a kid that had probably not been out of the state, to a man who has friends and associates around the world. As Director of Research for the American Sugar Cane League, and as our immediate supervisor for the past fourteen years, Charley's leadership will be missed by Herman and I. May he have nothing but the best of luck in his upcoming endeavors! We wish him well.

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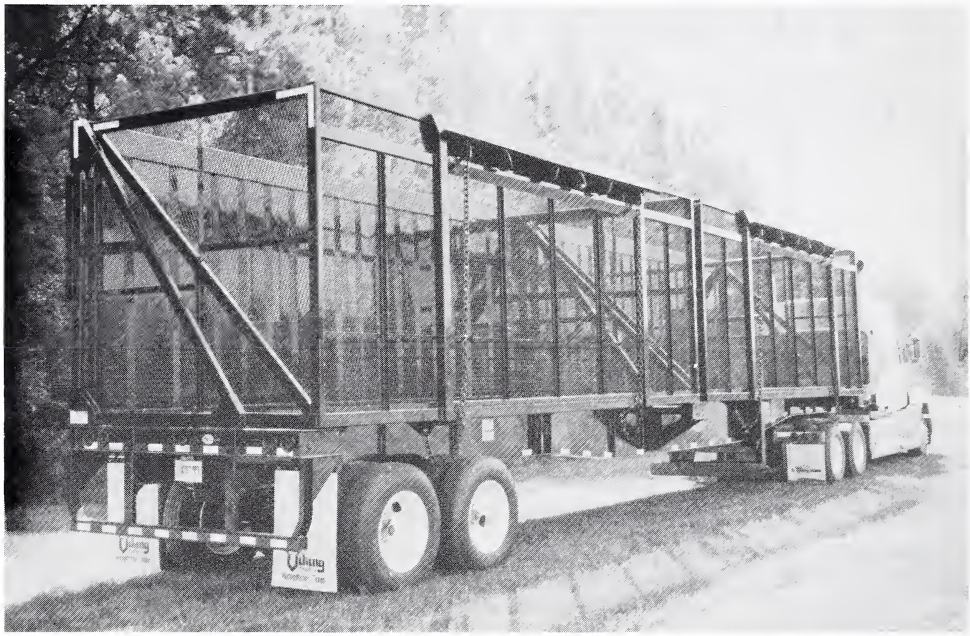

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MILLING AROUND

By Dr. Peter Rein
Audubon Sugar Institute
Louisiana State University AgCenter

Molasses Exhaustion

Audubon Sugar Institute will again be measuring, accurately, the purity in weekly composite molasses samples for all mills in Louisiana. It is being done to provide information on molasses exhaustion, which the mills can use as a reliable guide to losses of sugar in molasses.

Molasses exhaustion refers to the process of getting the sugar out of the final molasses. Molasses is a complicated solution of sucrose, salts, invert sugar and other organic components. There comes a point in the crystallization of sucrose from molasses where no further crystallization will take place. The sucrose solid is in equilibrium with the sucrose in solution. This equilibrium point defines how much sucrose can possibly be crystallized from the molasses. The purity at this point is sometimes called the "equilibrium purity" and depends on the temperature and the actual mix of non-sucrose components in the molasses

In practice, we do not have the time or equipment capacity to produce molasses at this purity. But, we can get quite close in well-operated pan houses, within a few units of purity of the equilibrium purity. We make use of a "Target Purity" formula, which gives an estimate of this equilibrium purity for the particular molasses sample. With the accurate measurements we now have for sucrose and invert sugars, the Target Purity is a reliable measure of the equilibrium purity.

"Target Purity" refers to a target for laboratory conditions, and is not a good name for the target that the mill should aim for. The most efficient mills around can only achieve Target, plus 2 to 3 units, which is the mill target, or perhaps what the mills should consider a benchmark.

Last season the average purity for Louisiana mills was Target, plus 9 units. This gives an indication of potential improvement in performance, equivalent to about 2% in overall recovery. One of the mills, during the course of the season, managed to reduce its purity from Target, plus 12, to Target plus 5. That is the kind of improvement we should be looking for. We refer to this difference between actual purity and Target Purity as the Target Purity Difference. You should aim to get it down as low as possible.

The reason we need to do the analyses at Audubon Sugar Institute is that we have available accurate and reliable measurement techniques for sucrose and monosaccharides (fructose and glucose, otherwise known as invert sugars or reducing sugars). In impure solutions like molasses, pol is not a good measure of sucrose content as it is affected by the changes in other components in the molasses. Likewise, the measurement of fructose and glucose by measuring reducing substances is unreliable. HPLC (or High Pressure Liquid Chromatography) is the analysis technique used to get this accurate data.

We need to measure the fructose and glucose as an accurate measure of invert sugars, as they decrease the solubility of sucrose in the molasses. We also need to measure ash, which we do by conductivity, as the ash components increase the solubility of sucrose in molasses. So the ratio of invert sugars to ash is used in the Target Purity formula to allow for these effects on the equilibrium purity.

What do you need to do to get the final molasses purity down? It is worthwhile going through the basics again, even though they may not be new to you:

- Get your C massecuite brix as high as possible, preferably over 97 refractometer brix
- If the crystallizers cannot handle the high brix, back blend with molasses, just as much as necessary for the crystallizer drives
- Drop C massecuites from the pan at as low a temperature as you can, preferably about 142 F (61 C).
- Run the C massecuite purity as low as possible, since this cuts down on the amount of C massecuite to process.
- Don't reduce the purity to the extent that the crystal content gets too low – this is not normally a problem in Louisiana, where massecuite purities are on the high side.
- Keep the crystallizers full if you have a continuous crystallizer system, to maximize crystallization.
- Try to cool to 104 F (40 C) in your crystallizers, for the same reason.
- Run the centrifugals as steadily as possible, without wild swings in throughput. The steadier the better.
- Use vapor on the C centrifugals so that you can back off on wash water. This can be done up until the molasses temperature reaches 140 F.

It is also of interest to look at the ratio of fructose to glucose in the molasses. This gives an indication of the extent to which Maillard reactions have taken place in the massecuites, mainly in the C stage. Ideally this ratio should be close to unity. In practice, it is often about 1.4, and can go up as high as 2. Maillard reactions need to be avoided, as they lead to the generation of carbon dioxide and other undesirable impurities, which increase viscosity and make good exhaustion more difficult. The best way to minimize Maillard Reaction is to keep strike temperatures, in the crystallizer down, as low as possible.

If you are serious about getting the final molasses purity down, you may need to take some measurements with a nutsch bomb (pressure filter) to establish the purity drops in the pan, in the crystallizers and the purity rise on curing. Armed with this information, you can identify the problem area, and make plans to improve it.

We hope these molasses analyses will be useful to you. We are ready to come and discuss them with you if you would like us to. We hope it is only the molasses that gets exhausted in your mills this season!

2002 TEXAS BUS TRIP

Attention Growers, Processors, and Sugar Industry Personnel

The American Sugar Cane League is receiving inquiries from industry members about the possibility of a bus trip in 2002. The League would like to organize a trip to south Texas to revisit the Texas sugar industry with several stops along the way.

At this time I am asking that if you have some interest in the trip to please pass the word around to those who may have missed this announcement, since our planning this trip is contingent on sufficient interest.

These trips are usually planned for late February, early March. There will be more information in subsequent issues of the "Sugar Bulletin." Until then I wish the harvest season to be a success.

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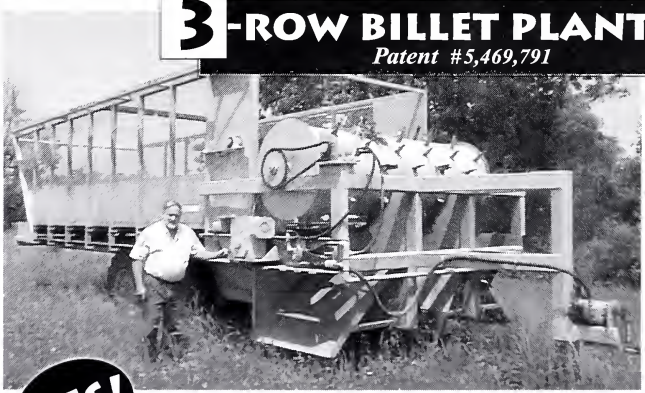

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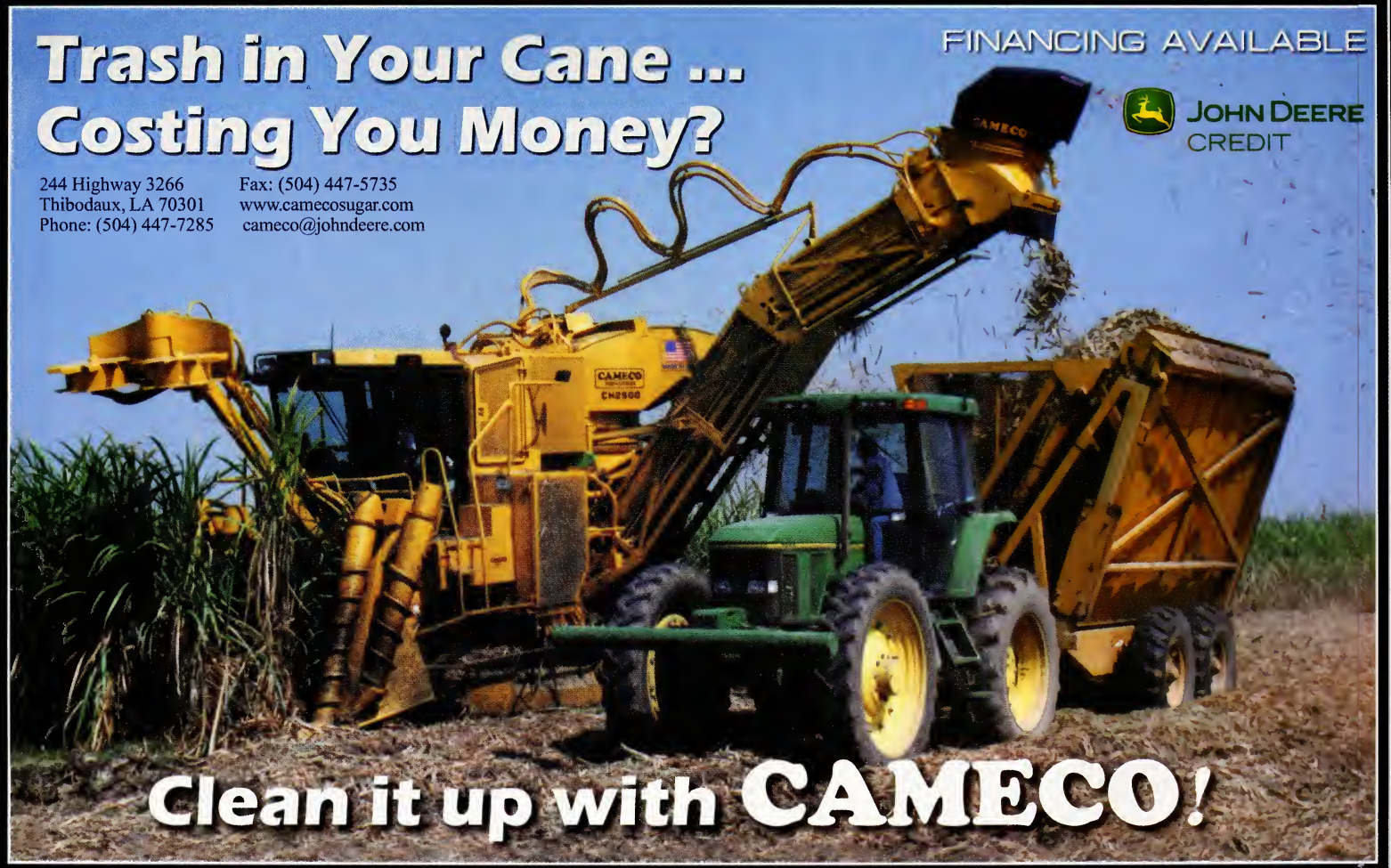
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THE SUGAR BULLETIN

Official Bulletin of the American Sugar Cane League of the U.S.A.

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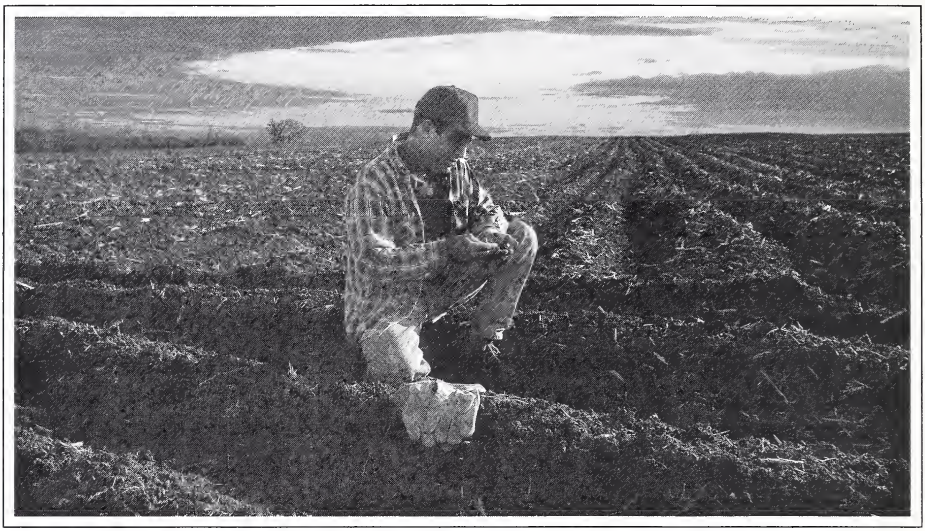

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Pleasant Burn Experience - Farm Bill - Mexico

The 2001 harvest season is in full swing at this date, and the reports have been generally good on the sugar content of the cane. The other good report that I wish to make, is that there have only been five burn complaints filed as of October 15, 2001. I wish to commend each and every grower in the industry. If we all continue to make the effort to follow the BMP's, and to harvest green cane whenever possible, the better the chances of keeping this long provided privilege of burning the trash and residue.

In fact, we had a pleasant occurrence last week at the office in Thibodaux. A lady called the office and advised that she would be hosting an event, in her yard, for 300 people the next day. She gave John Constant the time schedule for this event, and asked if we could help her. John told her he would do his best, knowing that ashes could, virtually, come from anywhere. But, he then went on the road and found the lady's neighboring farmer and asked for his assistance, which, by the way, he was more than happy to comply with. This lady was very polite with her request, as was the accommodating farmer in agreeing not to burn during that time period the next day. I would be willing to bet that the next time someone says something derogatory about farmers burning fields, and this lady is in that gathering, we will have a non-cane industry supporter. I thank her for the opportunity provided to this industry to show that our growers do care, and I thank grower Joe Benoit for his cooperation on this occasion.

Farm Bill

Charles Thibaut and I spent the week of October 1 in Washington, during which time House Ag Committee Chairman Combest, and ranking member Stenholm, brought the new Food Security Act of 2001 to the floor for debate and vote. Our usual opponent, Mr. Miller of Florida, and his new accomplice, the other Mr. Miller of California, brought their amendment to destroy the sugar program, the only program not receiving federal financial payments. Yet, sugar was the only program to have an anti amendment brought to the floor. Well, the good news is that the Miller-Miller amendment was soundly defeated by a vote 177 - 239.

Charles and I, escorted by Don Wallace and/or Macon Edwards, visited House members that week, including members of the Louisiana delegation. Of special note, Congressman Billy Tauzin (LA - 3rd District) made a floor speech on our industry's behalf defending our program. Billy has been a proponent of the sugar program and a friend of the Louisiana sugar industry, its growers and processor. Thanks for the effort, Billy!

While on the hill, we picked up that Senator Daschle, the majority leader in the Senate, had directed Ag Committee Chairman Harkin to begin hearings and markup on a Farm Bill. In fact, the rumor was that he wanted a bill ready to go to the floor of the Senate, for debate and a vote, within two weeks. That would be the week of this writing (October 15). In a conversation with our Washington reps on Thursday, they indicated that such committee hearings were to begin in the Senate committee this same week. Therefore, the time line, thus far, is being followed. Just when a bill will go to the floor of the Senate is not yet known, and there are many questions about which bill will be sent to the floor, as there are several differing proposals being floated around. There is a conservation-oriented proposal, a Democratic proposal, a Republican proposal, and not necessarily last or least, the House version (Food Security Act of 2001). The Ag Committee is heavily laden with

sugar senators. In fact, there are eight (8). Ironically, none are from "cane" states. If the Senate is as adamant to act, as was the House, then a bill should be voted on in the Senate very soon. But, since "nothing" that occurs in Washington is an exact science, I wouldn't dare stand by that prediction. Maybe we'll get a bill by the end of this calendar year.

Mexico

Jackie Theriot, Chairman of the League's Board, is one of four principals, nationwide, serving on a sugar industry task force to work on a resolution of the sugar side letter conflict with Mexico. Presently, the Mexican sugar industry is in much turmoil, with the growers having picketed and protested at government buildings and offices, the government having to help with getting them paid for their last crop's sugar, including payments into their retirement accounts, and now the government having taken ownership of 27 mills by default on government loans. The amount of money that has been put into the Mexican industry, by the Mexican government over the past several years, is in the billions of dollars. But, that being said, the sugar industry in Mexico is very important to the government, because there are more than 100,000 grower families . . . and they all can vote!

Meanwhile, this Task Force has had several meetings with U.S. legislators, as well as USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) and USTR (U.S. Trade Representative) officials. The objective is to be prepared to begin negotiating, in good faith, if and when the opportunity presents itself. With that being said, however, we received information this past week that indicates the Mexican Chamber of Deputies (equivalent of the U.S. House of Representatives) has an "initiative" to prohibit HFCS and corn imports to produce it. If this bill/initiative passes, it would be a serious blow to the NAFTA and U.S. - Mexico agricultural trade relations. The implications of such an action would have, I would think, a direct effect on sugar policy as contained in the side letter of NAFTA. We will continue to monitor the Mexican situation.

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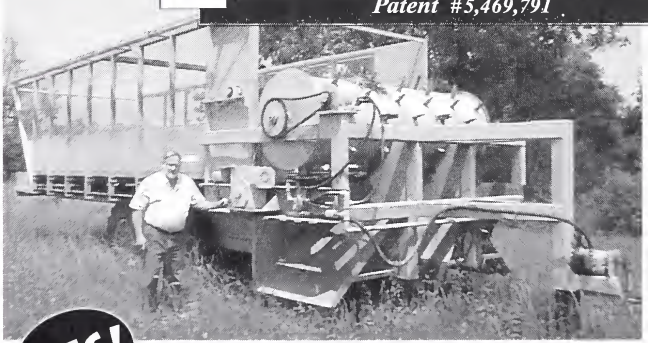

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Update

Sugar supporters successfully fought off attempts to cripple the program during the House debate on the farm bill (HR 2646), defeating the Miller-Miller amendment by a 62 vote margin (239-177, a 57.5% majority). Sugar supporters received broad support from both sides of the political aisle, with Democrats voting 130-72 in opposition to the amendment (64%) and Republicans voting 107-105 in opposition (50.5%). The full House then approved the farm bill legislation, including the positive changes to the sugar program previously described in the August bulletin, by a 291-120 margin. Producers should express their appreciation to Congressmen Billy Tauzin, Richard Baker, Jim McCrery, Bill Jefferson, Chris John, John Cooksey and David Vitter for all of their hard work in support of Louisiana's sugar producers.

The focus now turns to the Senate, where Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) is working with the other Members to develop a farm bill for markup. According to reports, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) has urged Harkin to complete work before the end of October in hopes of moving the farm bill before the Senate goes into recess or adjournment. Senate Budget Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) has also expressed support for farm bill action this year, stressing budgetary reasons for acting now, while Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), ranking Republican on the committee, has led Republicans in urging the Senate to delay action on a farm bill until 2002. At the time of this writing, it is unclear whether the Senate will be able to act on a full farm bill or simply mark-up non-contentious titles (such as a credit title) of a farm bill this year.

Chairman Harkin has indicated his intention to include sugar language comparable to the House bill, while Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) has sent a "Dear Colleague" to the other Senators seeking support in an effort to introduce "reform" legislation. Santorum's legislation would:

- reduce loan rates by one cent/lb each year and end them after 2004;
- eliminate the ability to forfeit sugar in lieu of loan repayment (i.e. eliminate "non-recourse" feature of loan program); and,
- require that import quotas be administered to keep prices at no more than the price support level plus interest (or the world price level once sugar loans are eliminated in 2004).

Democratic staff for the Agriculture Committee have worked on a concept paper that would phase out AMTA payments while phasing in new conservation payments, as per Harkin's expressed intention to re-focus agricultural programs on conservation. Southern Members are likely to push for a bill similar to the House bill, while Members from the Midwest and the plains states will seek changes to help their wheat, corn and soybean constituencies.

USDA WASDE October Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its October World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2001/2002 was unchanged from September. For 2000/01, beet sugar production is increased 40,000 tons, raw value, while no change was anticipated in 2001/02 beet production. Cane sugar production for 2000/01 was unchanged at 4,072,000 tons, raw value, while 2001/02 was unchanged at 4,195,000 tons. Louisiana production for 2001/02 was projected at 1,760,000 tons, while 2000/01 production was pegged at 1,570,000.

Total use for 2001/02 is down 10,000 tons from September. The estimated 2000/01 end of season stocks-to-use ratio is 20.5 percent, up from 19.8 percent in September. The 2001/02 stocks-to-use ratio is projected at 14.1 percent, but anticipated PIK reductions in beet sugar production (likely to be included in the November WASDE) could reduce the ratio even further to a 13.7-12.2 percent range, similar to the 1993-95 levels when raw sugar prices were approximately 22.5 cents.

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ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Harvest Starts - Planting Ends - Field Yields

All of the sugar mills in Louisiana have started their harvest season. Most mills are reporting an average sugar production above 180 pounds of sugar per ton of cane. This is an outstanding start for as early as this harvest season began. Many growers are reporting TRS's of more than 210 pounds. Polado seems to have worked quite well this year. In many cases it was applied to actively growing cane and growers have reported increases of 40 to 50 pounds of sugar on cane treated for 40 to 45 days. In most areas, LCP 85-384 has responded better than other commercial varieties. Fields of HoCP 85-845, even where treated with Polado for 45 days, have a much lower TRS than similar fields of LCP 85-384.

On October 13, just a day before the writing of this article, a low pressure system from the west passed through with high winds and dumped large amounts of rain. Much of the cane that was already down was knocked down again and the small amount of cane standing erect was shaken up. Many areas are reporting at least four inches of rain with the system. This should drive down sugar, make field conditions bad for at least the next week, and end any chance of planting any more cane this fall.

Planting Ends

After some mills had started harvest, there were about three weeks of dry weather within which most growers completed their planting for 2001. While growers were planting, mills were not receiving enough cane and were forced to run at less than full speed. Although they had slowed, many mills still ran out of cane during the night. When the rain again started to fall, making field conditions unsuitable for planting, growers started delivering more cane to the mill.

Most fields of plant-cane have good stands and are off to a good start for next year's crop. Some early planted fields have erratic stands. In fields planted before the heavy rains, there are weak spots found in the lower areas. These are areas of fields that remain water logged or where the runoff from the heavy rains deposited soil and increased the soil covering the seed-piece. In most of these areas, the seed-pieces are still sound. So that they do not stay damp throughout the winter, these low spots should be better drained, if possible. The League's Agronomists will continue to monitor the condition of plant cane in these fields.

A few fields were planted at three dates, so there are rows that range from very good populations to rows that have almost no cane showing on them. A few fields were planted, and then were not covered for three weeks. These fields have very little cane showing in them.

Herman Waguespack, Jr. has had a couple of growers ask him to look at fields that were unknowingly planted with Polado treated seed. According to Herman, "Stands in the fields planted with seed cane that was unintentionally sprayed, or with seed onto which Polado had drifted, are very erratic." Because it was late in the year, harvest had started and there were a small number of acres involved, his suggestion to the growers was to hold onto the cane and see how good, or bad, the stands are after winter. The reduction in stands will depend on the treatment rate, the erectness of the cane at the time of application, and length of time the Polado was on the cane before it was harvested for seed. Herman reasons, "If the plant-cane stands are not too bad, and with the stubbling ability of LCP 85-384, there may be a chance to keep the crop into stubble." However, he knows that usually this is not true.

Some fields of planted cane were treated with Command and are now showing many white shoots. Most of the discolored cane is on either side of quarter-drains or can be found in fields of lightly covered cane. According to Dr. Ed Richard, weed-specialist at the USDA/ARS research facility in Houma, in the past there were no yield losses when cane is turned white by this herbicide in the fall. Most of the research work done with this and other herbicides was done on fields planted with whole-stalk seed. He does think that more research is needed to learn what effect this, and other herbicide treatments have on cane planted with billets.

Field Yields

At the start of harvest growers were taking out their second, third and fourth stubble fields of LCP 85-384. Many of these fields were in clay soils and had been treated with Polado for about 40 days. Fields of this type were reported to be yielding from 22 to 24 tons of cane per acre. If these fields had been planted with one of the older varieties, they would most probably have had yields of 14 to 16 tons. Fields of the same age cane on better soils were reported to be yielding more than 28 tons per acre.

Due to last year's drought, many growers in the more western areas of the cane belt produced average yields of 20 tons or less. However, with these light tonnages, the sugar per ton was higher than had been experienced for previous harvests. There were many questions as to what yields could be expected for these fields this year. So far, the 2001 crop's yield is very encouraging. In the worst fields of older stubble that have been properly maintained, yields of 16 to 18 tons are reported, while the better fields are yielding 26 tons and above with a lower sugar than the previous year. For the growers in this area, the sugar per acre should be much better for the 2001 crop.

All growers are to be congratulated. Only five complaints about smoke and soot have been forwarded to the League's office. Most growers are combine harvesting green cane. The residue is being burned when the wind is out of a direction so that the smoke affects the least number of people. Also, burning of the residue does not put large amounts of soot into the air. **Keep up the good work.**

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AMERICAN SUGAR CANE LEAGUE

BUS TRIP 2002

The American Sugar Cane League is hoping to sponsor a bus trip in late February/early March. Before plans are finalized, a sense of industry interest is needed. If you think that you and/or others may be interested in taking a bus trip to the Texas cane industry, **please return the completed form below**. If there is little response to his request, a trip will not be planned.

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MILLING AROUND

By Dr. Peter Rein
Audubon Sugar Institute
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The ISSCT Congress in Australia

The 24th ISSCT congress was held from 16th to 21st September, with pre-congress tours starting a few days earlier. The timing could not have been worse in relation to the terrorist attacks in the United States. I was fortunate to get to Brisbane just an hour before the first function. However the travel plans of a number of people were disrupted, and attendance was down by 10% from the number of 750 who had registered. Most of those affected were from the US.

This report aims to provide some highlights from the Congress and the Australian industry. The Congress again served as a wonderful forum for technical interchange, and the quality of the technical presentations was significantly improved. In addition to the technical highlights, you would probably be pleased to hear that one of the three new Honorary Life Members elected comes from the US – namely Jim Irvine. This is a well-deserved honor for him.

Features of the Australian Industry

- Production has expanded to over 5 million metric tons per year, but production in the last few years has been adversely affected by the weather and by pests and diseases.

- One variety Q124 now accounts for over 80% of the crop, and was hit badly last year by orange rust.

- Nearly 70% of the crop is harvested green by chopper harvesters. This is done primarily in warm areas where the trash blanket provides significant advantages in preserving moisture, reducing weeds, recycling organic matter and reducing soil erosion.

- The harvesting and transport systems are highly efficient. The average period for all cane harvested between cutting and crushing is less than 12 hours. This together with the fact that the cane is generally not burnt (burning promotes degradation) result in mixed juice purities consistently above 90, leading to high factory recoveries.

- All mills prepare billeted cane in heavy-duty shredders only. None of the mills use cane knives.

- The mills are highly automated and well instrumented with plant wide systems providing excellent communications throughout the plant. They are able to run the whole factory with fewer than 15 people per shift.

- NIR measurements are being used more

prominently in cane payment systems.

- An active research program is underway at the Sugar Research Institute and the universities in Queensland. Significant advances in equipment design and operation are reported, but they are reluctant to reveal their research results outside of the Australian mills.

- The mills are large and make use of very large pans (batch and continuous), large clarifiers and cascade drum sugar dryers.

ISSCT Congress highlights

A symposium on new technologies for factory processes highlighted three areas, namely, membrane separation processes, chromatographic separation applications, and gasification of bagasse to maximize the production of power for export purposes.

- Membrane processes on their own are unlikely to find application in sugar mills, other than in niche applications such as production of organic sugar. They are most likely to be used in conjunction with ion exchange or chromatographic separation processes.

- Although chromatographic techniques are quite widely applied in the beet sugar industry to recover sugar from molasses, it seems unlikely that applications will be seen in the near future in cane sugar mills because of additional problems. The use of fractal distributors may help to reduce the cost of the systems and bring them closer to economic viability.

- Gasification of bagasse, including cane trash, can increase the amount of power generated for export by an order of magnitude. Power is generated in a gas turbine, prior to using the gases in a steam recovery boiler. Serious research is underway in Brazil, Australia and other countries. But there are significant design problems still to be overcome before gasification becomes a practical reality

Details of interest from the other papers presented are:

- The use of NIR techniques for cane analysis in Fiji was reported on. Three posters on the use of NIR were also presented.

- Sugar Research Institute of Australia reported on improvements to clarifiers following work using computational fluid dynamics to optimize performance. Retention times are down in existing short residence time clarifiers and are predicted to be halved as a result of the modifications.

- Two papers dealt with the direct production of white sugar in a cane sugar mill. One from Tongaat-Hulett Sugar uses membranes and ion exchange for ash and color removal. The other reported work done by Amalgamated Sugar, together with the Florida Belle Glade Co-op, using membranes, juice softening and chromatographic separation. Both processes also improve considerably the recovery of sugar and increase capacity of evaporators and pans. Commercial exploitation in a few years is possible.

- Cogeneration of power received attention from a number of authors. An associated topic was the handling of trash, and its use in power generation.

- Bundaberg Sugar have developed a two-roll mill, which seems to have performed well in installations in three sugar mills, with encouraging results. Again they were unwilling to give some of the important details of the installation, but they claim reduced reabsorption of juice due to the geometry and their technique of separating expressed juice from the bagasse. The two rolls are installed in a horizontal plane with the bagasse moving vertically downward. With no trash plate or pressure feeder,

power used is substantially lower. They claim an installation of two roll mills will reduce capital outlay by 40%.

- Tongaat-Hulett Sugar reported on the recycling of clarifier muds directly to a diffuser, eliminating the filter station altogether and eliminating the loss of sugar in cake. A simple means of controlling the amount to be recycled has been developed and the quantity recycled is only 4% on mixed juice. Because of the increased recovery and reduced costs, this has now been adopted in most of the diffuser factories in South Africa, and consideration is being given to recycling muds to milling tandems.

- Two papers relating to the optimum length of a crushing season were presented.

- The Co-products Section included contributions on fermentation products, production of power and environmental issues. A paper from Copersucar, Brazil integrated all these, describing production of a biodegradable plastic in a mill together with co-generation and alcohol production, with positive effects on the environment.

ISSCT Factory Workshop on Reduction of Sugar Losses.

A workshop was held concurrently with the Congress. The subject was that covered in "Milling Around" in September, and followed the same issues. The world's experts discussed losses in relation to a number of categories:

- Physical losses – this covered losses in harvesting, losses due to trash in cane, measurement errors, entrainment losses and packing losses.

- Chemical losses – largely measurement and prediction of inversion losses, and the effect of high pH on losses of invert sugars.

- Losses in molasses – speakers from a number of different countries gave their perspective and related experiences. This loss is largely dependent on the quantity of impurity entering the factory in the juice, as well as the way the crystallizers and centrifugals are operated – a target purity equation is essential to gauge the latter.

- Microbiological losses – sugar cane juice is rich in carbohydrate and nutrients, and fermentation losses start from the moment cane is burnt. The implications for operation of factories to minimize these losses in the factory front end were covered.

- Losses due to crystal characteristics – not really a big issue.

- Filter station losses – losses by microbiological means and through poor cake filterability, as well as the elimination of these losses by recycling clarifier muds to the extraction plant.

- Performance Indicators – the need to use measures that tell you how well different parts of the factory are doing, particularly in relation to losses, depends on having reliable measurements; good data will give you good information.

- Design of equipment to reduce losses – considered how plant and equipment design can influence losses, e.g. residence time at high temperatures in evaporators and clarifiers, good utilization of crystallizer capacity by eliminating by-passing or stagnant volume, details of centrifugal design that affect losses.

The workshop was a useful forum for discussing issues of common concern. It seems unlikely however that the workshop will be held simultaneously with the Congress in future – a workshop at a separate time and place as has been traditional is more likely.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

By James F. Coerver, P.E.
G.E.C., Inc.

TMDL PROGRAM DERAILS

The TMDL program that Louisiana environmentalists sued to have put on fast track has been derailed (see January 2000 issue of Sugar Bulletin). Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) is a new name given to a longstanding and fundamentally flawed USEPA/environmentalist initiative under the Clean Water Act that is intended to cause stream water quality standards to be met by allocating (i.e. cutting back sufficiently) on point pollution discharges in a watershed. The initiative was revised in recent years to include agriculture and forestry "non-point" sources. The stated objective, achieving stream water quality standards, is a requirement established in the law, and is widely supported by all that believe that the stream standards, as promulgated, are appropriate and achievable. The problem is that in many, and probably most cases the individual stream standards are neither appropriate nor achievable.

The situation in Louisiana is a good illustration of the national problem. After enactment of the Water Pollution Control Act in 1972, when an environmentalist dominated USEPA required all states to establish stream standards, Louisiana was required to adopt a minimum dissolved oxygen (DO) standard of 5.0 ppm for all coastal streams in spite of local expert testimony and historical data proving that 5.0 ppm DO cannot be and never has been achieved in unpolluted Louisiana coastal streams during the hot weather season. In fact, USEPA sent two "Expert PhD biologists," from New England yet, to tell the Louisiana Stream Control Commission that maintenance year round of a 5.0 ppm minimum DO concentration is absolutely essential for the survival of fish species native to the Louisiana coast. Things got nasty when a Commissioner remarked that he was certainly glad that no one has so informed the local fish population. Similar silly standards were also ordered for other streams in the state. Then came the ultimatum from USEPA - adopt stream standards as directed or no more NPDES permits would be issued, and no Federal funds in Louisiana for municipal sewers or other purposes. Louisiana, and other states of the Union, have subsequently been involved in a futile struggle to attain unattainable standards, first under the Basin Planning program as "waste load allocations" which has now evolved as TMDL.

Most Louisiana farmers are familiar with some of the TMDL program transactions. Recent program efforts have included use of agricultural "best management practices" on a subsidized and/or voluntary basis, including some demonstration projects. Although this voluntary program has done a lot of good, the environmentalists are insisting on the imposition of mandatory controls on agriculture, including termination of agricultural activities if TMDLs so indicate. In the thinking of Louisiana environmentalists, coastal streams should not receive any oxygen demanding material which means "zero" discharge from agricultural and forestry activities in the coastal zone. Of course, the natural sources of stream oxygen depletion are of no concern to them, just as it was of no

concern to the infamous New England fish biologists.

The unpopular and controversial TMDL program was cranked up for a major push during the waning years of the Clinton-Browner EPA administration. However, Congress promptly pulled the plug on appropriations. The program was then redrafted so that there would be 13 years allowed for states to develop and promulgate TMDLs, and revised regulations on how TMDLs are to be prepared was promulgated in July 2000. Unfortunately, the redraft did not address the major flaw-inappropriate and/or unachievable stream standards. Also, the National Research Council (NRC) was contracted to study, evaluate and report on the TMDL program as redrafted.

As time was running out for the Clinton administration, but many months before promulgation of the July 2000 rules, Louisiana environmentalists sued USEPA to compel TMDLs to be established and enforced immediately. A Federal judge ordered USEPA to promulgate immediately a TMDL for the Mermentau-Teche-Vermillion river basin, and to promulgate TMDLs for all other Louisiana streams within seven years. This unfeasible and foolish ruling was made in spite of expert testimony that there were no regulations to guide the process and no scientific data presently available from which to determine allowable daily discharges to the streams. Fortunately, higher authorities have nullified this injustice, but the wasted effort and expenses on this legal mischief making are not retrievable.

Although the Clinton-Browner EPA did promulgate the controversial TMDL rule in July 2000, the program was immediately challenged in court by more than 20 parties, and implementation was thwarted by Congress via a rider to USEPA's fiscal 2001 budget.

In June 2001, NRC released the long awaited report on the redrafted TMDL program. That report indicates clearly that the problem is not with science, but that the program cannot possibly succeed unless stream water quality standards are established at levels that are actually achievable and are no more stringent than needed to support present actual and/or highly probable and desirable future uses. In fact, many or most streams that are now artificially classified as standards non-compliant are, as of now, actually clean enough for all legitimate uses. That is essentially what the Louisiana Stream Control Commission told USEPA in 1974, but to no avail. Of course, the environmentalists are now denouncing the NRC for recommending what the environmentalists call "backsliding" on environmental quality standards.

One of the first things that happened in the new Bush administration was suspension of the controversial TMDL rule until NRC made its report, and an internal evaluation and estimate of projected costs could be made. After receiving the NRC report, it was announced that revised TMDL rules would be forthcoming but not before spring of 2002, and that states would need 15 years of work to prepare and promulgate effective TMDLs. A June 2001 USEPA report estimates that program implementation costs would run up to $4.3 billion annually for the monumental effort. That is an enormous amount of money to spend on something that could have been accomplished 20 years ago, if only there had been a modicum of common sense in the administration of our national environmental programs.

The "derailing" of the TMDL train is supposed to be only temporary, but with the national economy on the skids, and the economic challenges posed by the events of September 11, 2001, this long mismanaged and controversial TMDL program may never get the moneys needed for full implementation. Actually, it would be better for the environment and the national economy if the TMDL program was junked until the job of establishing appropriate stream water quality standards, nationwide, can be completed. Doing so may prove that the TMDL program is not needed at all.

Biotechnology in the Louisiana Sugarcane Breeding Program

By Dr. Yong-Bao Pan
USDA-ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit

New sugarcane varieties have to go through 12 to 14 years of field testing and observations before being released for commercial planting. Over 20 traits are evaluated by breeders, including high tonnage, high sugar, early maturity, low fiber, harvestability, cold tolerance, ratooning ability, and resistance to various disease and insect pests. In Louisiana, the sugarcane breeding program is conducted under a Three-Way Memorandum of Understanding between the USDA-ARS Sugarcane Research Unit, LSU, and the American Sugar Cane League. The USDA-ARS Sugarcane Research Unit's breeding program has three principle components: commercial, basic, and molecular. The objective of the commercial component is to develop and release varieties adapted to Louisiana with higher sugar yielding ability through "recurrent selection." The basic component, started in 1964, aims to expand the genetic base of the commercial varieties by crossing them with the wild relatives. Breeding sugarcane has never been easy due to the multitude of genes and chromosomes and the lack of knowledge about them. The molecular or biotech component was initiated in 1994 to improve the efficiency of commercial and basic breeding programs.

The term "biotech" is defined by USDA as "the use of living organisms, cells, subcellular organelles, and/or parts of those structures, as well as the molecules, to effect biological, chemical, or physical changes." The USDA-ARS biotech research team has been working in five main areas.

DNA Fingerprints for Sugarcane Varieties and Breeding Lines. Commercial sugarcane varieties are hybrid derivatives from several wild species. A world collection of these wild species and associated subspecies is maintained at the USDA-ARS Subtropical Horticulture Research Station in Miami, Florida. About 100 clones of these wild species are maintained at the Sugarcane Research Unit at Houma and used as parental lines in the basic breeding program. Since 1997, biotech tools have been used to produce fingerprints for these wild clones and the fingerprints have been used in assisting in the identification of offspring from the planned basic crosses. Since early 2001, DNA fingerprints also became available for many varieties and breeding lines used as parents in the commercial and basic crosses due to collaborative research efforts between the USDA-ARS Sugarcane Research Unit at Houma, Southern Cross University, Lismore, Australia and the USDA-ARS Subtropical Horticulture Research Station in Miami, Florida.

DNA Markers Specific to Sugarcane Wild Species, Varieties and Breeding Lines. Good varieties have to be selected from among several hundreds of thousands of genetic combinations through sexual crossing. Sugarcane is a tropical grass with both male and female organs in the same flower. Crossing is challenging because male fertility (pollen production) varies according to variety and environment with complete male sterility rarely occurring. Therefore, some of the seeds produced by the female parent may come from its own pollen and not the pollen from the planned male parent even when breeders try to prevent pollen fertility in the female flowers by hot-water or alcohol-immersion treatment. In order to assist sugarcane breeders in selecting true hybrids, i.e., plants originating from seeds produced by the planned male and female parents, biotechnologists have developed DNA markers specific to individual wild species, varieties or breeding lines. These markers are small segments of DNA distributed

among all chromosomes of the sugarcane plant. A species (or variety or breeding line)-specific DNA marker is found only in that species (or variety or breeding line) and its presence is not affected by the environment. Since 1997, several DNA markers have been developed at the Sugarcane Research Unit, including two PCR markers and one RAPD marker. One advantage of DNA marker-assisted selection is that selection can be made directly on seedlings in the greenhouse. By using these markers, breeders can identify and discard the selfs and off-types in the greenhouse before they are transplanted into the field. The proportion of discards can be as high as 50% depending on the amount of pollen produced by the female parent. By eliminating these early, the odds of finding superior varieties are increased. In theory, the numbers of seedlings being screened each year could be doubled without increasing land and labor requirements.

DNA Markers Specific to Desirable Traits. Most agronomic traits sugarcane breeders are interested in, are quantitative, i.e., they are controlled by several genes. These traits include plant height, vigor, stalk weight, flowering, rhizomatous, sucrose content (BRIX), cold tolerance, and ratooning ability. Because of the complexity of the sugarcane genome, it is difficult to find DNA markers that are linked to these quantitative traits. This has been one of the major objectives of the International Consortium for Sugarcane Biotechnology (ICSB) in which the USDA-ARS and the American Sugar Cane League are members. Currently, the Sugarcane Research Unit's scientists are building a reference population for LCP 85-384 and are searching for DNA markers that associate with resistance to the sugarcane borer and RSD, cold tolerance, sugar content, and ratooning ability.

Biotech Sugarcane. A biotech sugarcane represents a new sugarcane variety that carries at least one foreign gene in its genetic makeup. The foreign gene can be of any non-sugarcane origin (animal, plant, bacterium, fungus, virus, or even an artificial gene assembled by the biotechnologists). The first experiment on sugarcane transformation was conducted in the late 1980s in Australia. Since then, more than a dozen laboratories in sugarcane growing regions around the world have started projects on sugarcane transformation. In the U.S., Dr. J. E. Irvine's group at Texas A&M University at Weslaco took the lead on sugarcane transformation. They worked with two genes which conferred tolerance to the herbicide, Liberty, and the sugarcane mosaic virus. Three research laboratories in Florida and three laboratories in Louisiana are also conducting research in this area. To date it is believed that transgenic sugarcane varieties have been produced at four of these locations including the Sugarcane Research Unit at Houma, and are currently undergoing greenhouse or field testing under APHIS regulations.

Despite its potential, there are concerns from the general public that transgenic crops may not be completely harmless. As a result, consumable products from many transgenic crops are currently rejected by the food processors and grocery vendors. Crops affected include rice, corn, soybeans, canola, cotton, and other horticultural crops. Concerns over lost market shares have stymied the further development of transformed sugarcane as well as sugar beet. Biotechnologists are conducting research on the issues raised, such as potential toxicity of consumable products from transgenic crops to animals and humans, unpredicted gene flow into other species through out-crossing, and related ecosystem issues. Out-crossing is important when dealing with genetically transformed agricultural crops that flower and produce marketable products in the form of seeds, tubers, fruits, or fibers, or anything involving tissue. To this end, it is unfortunate that transgenic sugarcane in Louisiana is being treated in the same manner, because sugarcane does not flower naturally here. With regard to food safety, the commercial product of sugarcane is refined sucrose, which is in fact a pure chemical compound. We all are aware that during the extracting and refining process in the mills and refineries, extremely high temperatures and pressures are used, conditions that would denature and destroy any plant material except sucrose.

DNA-based Disease Detection. Since 1994, several DNA-based laboratory protocols were developed at the Sugarcane Research Unit for

specific detection of bacterial pathogens causing leaf scald and RSD and the virus causing YLS. These procedures are particularly useful when dealing with quarantine inspection of the cane being brought to Louisiana from other countries and states for use in the breeding program and testing of foundation stocks for micropropagation of healthy seed cane. DNA-based tests are generally more sensitive and accurate and can be conducted even at early growth stages when the sap is not available or less abundant.

In order to remain profitable during times of low sugar prices, sugarcane growers must increase their sugar yields while minimizing the cost of production. Of the nine key issues that affect the sugarcane industry, i.e., land, fertility, water, varieties, planting densities, crop protection, cultural practices, mechanization, and computer technology, varietal selection remains a top priority. Today, the farmers' need for new varieties better than LCP 85-384 is greater than ever. Biotechnology advances such as those made at the USDA-ARS Sugarcane Research Unit at Houma, LA should assist the Louisiana breeding program in developing these varieties.

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We Wish You All A Happy Holiday Season!

The Sugar Bulletin

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To Interested La Sugar Industry Personnel:

The League is sponsoring a bus trip to the Texas sugar industry. The date of the trip is March 3 - March 8. We estimate the cost to be under $600.

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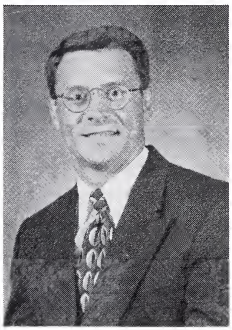

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Burning - E-Mail Group - Weights

Let me start by saying it is obvious that the vast majority of growers are doing a good job with their burning. While the number of complaints, legitimate and otherwise, have been reduced tremendously thus far this harvest season, there is still some room for improvement. It never ceases to amaze me that some people, who actually know the farmer whose field fire may have offended them, will call the League office, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environmental Quality, the local parish Office of Emergency Preparedness, or all of the above rather than contact the grower directly. It tends to make me wonder if they'd rather vent their anger on someone who doesn't have a clue of just who they are, where the field is located, what type of burn was conducted, or even if the fire was actually set by the farmer. All I know is that I find it much easier these days to just go home and let my wife and children "chew" about what's wrong with everything. The good news is that I can usually shut them out or ignore them. However, John, Nannette, the people at the other receiving agencies, and I can't do that when called. Rightly or wrongly, it's tough to be verbally abused when you're the recipient of the complaint and had no responsibility for the situation.

As certified burn managers, you now have the training to conduct burns correctly. Even though a lot of it is just common sense, the majority of the complaints probably could be avoided. Avoid burning on those days when conditions are not right. Wait until after that school is closed and the students and faculty have gone home. Don't burn that cane today if the smoke "just might" be carried into that nursing home, hospital, subdivision or school. There are some public officials in some of our parishes that would love nothing more than to stop you from burning completely if they could. We don't want to give them a reason.

Additionally, I spoke with a grower who said that someone went into his field and lit it. He can't prove it! I think part of what was advised in burn-management school was for the grower or burn manager on your farm to do several things. These steps were not concocted to make more work for you but to help you defend yourself. Defend against what, you ask? The farmer whose field got burned, with three resulting accidents on the smoke-covered highway adjacent to his field, probably has no records of his daily burning. This leaves him with a very weak defense. Is he frustrated? You bet. Any of us in that situation would be also.

However, if proper daily records are kept, you will at least have documentation of your daily activities. Wind direction, what "category day," which fields you burned each day. Then I believe there is the matter of a water wagon and someone in the field to observe the actual burn. How many in the industry are observing this element of Burn Management? In the insurance business, we were constantly reminded by instructors of continuing education, attorneys, and company reps to "document, document, document." Who would have ever thought that as a cane farmer you would one day need to realize the importance of "documenting" your activities. We document our rotations and what we've fertilized. I believe that the day may have

arrived to now document our burns.

In an effort to avoid sounding redundant, I would again suggest that this exercise of managing your field burns is serious business. Each and every grower needs this vital tool available to use when necessary. Some growers are trying to cut green, but not all farmers can afford that luxury. If your insurer begins getting lawsuits filed over burning, then your premiums will go up. Or worse, the insurance companies could just delete liability coverage for claims related to "field" burning. If that occurs, then it will be you, your lawyer, your pocket book, and no insurance company and their paid lawyers defending you. Please. Think about what you were taught. Think about where you are. Stay with the fire. Burning is your privilege to lose, and I don't think that is what you want. So, please, think about your every action . . . It may be an inconvenience to come back and burn that field on another day, but it may end up being the best decision you ever made in farming. And your neighbors just might appreciate it. If they don't say anything about your burning, then you've done a good job.

E-Mail Group

The e-mail group that I started over a year ago continues to grow in size. Any grower, even if it is your child or wife's e-mail address, and they'll let you use it, send it in to Nannette at nnickens@amscl.org. One of the biggest challenges I have as General Manager is remembering that what may be an everyday, routine occurrence to me may well be news for you. I'm trying to think in that mode so that you, the members, can at least be fairly up to date on events. But, sometimes I get so tied up in the things I need to do to follow up daily, that I neglect to send out the info. Additionally, please feel free to e-mail me at cjmel@amscl.org if you have questions or if I haven't brought everyone up to date. Sometimes nothing has happened, but there is no reason for you not to know that also. That's the wonderful thing about the Internet, I don't have to try and track you down and vice versa.

Weights

While there are just a few people in the industry grumbling because they aren't being allowed to see how much their trailers are hauling over the 100,000 pounds GVW, the reports, industry wide, are that growers and truckers are doing a good job. For those who are concerned with how much they are over, the law is such that we should be worrying about how much we are under the 100,000 pound limit. Not over. DOTD officials and State Police have commended the industry on its pro-active attempt to regulate itself on our weights. This type of respect from the bureaucrats and enforcement people will play well during the debates for higher fees and lower load limits which will begin in Baton Rouge after the first of the year. There are several parishes in the "Belt" where the Police Juries or Parish Councils would like to outlaw cane trucks and tractors from parish roads and, if they could, state roads. So trying to be good citizens and neighbors will get us a lot further than the old attitude some have had of just doing what they please and to hell with everybody else. Thanks to all of you in the industry, including mill management, for working to make our roads safer, with less trash on them, and cooperating in this effort.

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Update

The Senate Agriculture Committee, in mid-November, approved a much-altered farm bill proposal sponsored by Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA). The bill may face budgetary hurdles before it can be brought to the Senate floor, and partisan battles seem certain to complicate floor debate. Harkin's commodity title, including the House-passed sugar language and repeal of the forfeiture penalty, was supported by all Committee Democrats and Senator Tim Hutchinson (R-AR).

In putting together the majority necessary to approve the measure, Harkin included additional funding for dairy, peanut and rice programs that will increase the likelihood of a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) score in excess of the budget resolution limits on agricultural spending, despite his decision to reduce the size of his conservation spending. If CBO scores the bill higher than the budget limits, some paring down will be necessary before the bill can move to the Senate floor. Further complicating the situation, some GOP Senators are planning to attach the energy bill to the farm bill when it reaches the floor, a move that could bog down farm policy deliberations once again.

Senate Agriculture Chairman Harkin's deal-making began in earnest after Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) introduced a bipartisan bill (S.1673) with Senators Tim Hutchinson (R-AR), Zell Miller (D-GA), Jesse Helms (R-NC), Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and John Breaux (D-LA) that closely reflects the House-passed legislation but includes the elimination of the loan forfeiture penalty on sugar. Senators Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Thad Cochran (R-MS) put together a GOP alternative proposal that would provide fixed payments at the 1996 AMTA levels, with a $50,000 payment limit, with base acreage (producer option to update bases to create a soybean base) and loan rate language similar to the House bill. Cochran-Roberts, which could reappear when the Senate debates the farm bill, purportedly includes sugar provisions similar to the House bill, but without the forfeiture penalty elimination and allotment language.

Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) has introduced anti-sugar program language similar to the original Miller-Miller amendment in the House. This bill (S.1652) would gradually reduce the sugar loan rate from $.17 in 2001 down to $.14 in 2004. At the same time, the loans would be altered to recourse loans (preventing forfeiture of sugar) and envisions a conversion to private sector financing beginning 2005. Further, the bill would terminate authority for marketing quotas and allotments and eliminate sugar beets and sugarcane from the list of designated non-basic agricultural commodities eligible for price supports. We anticipate that Santorum will offer his language as an amendment on the Senate floor.

Assuming that the budgetary hurdles can be surmounted, the Senate Democratic leadership hopes to resolve the farm bill details and write the committee report during the Thanksgiving recess. This would provide the Senate with an opportunity to approve the farm bill upon its return on Dec 3, potentially setting the stage for a House-Senate conference during the December holidays. If, however, Harkin's bill receives a budgetary score that is too high to resolve, look

for Daschle to seek a bipartisan alternative in the coming weeks.

WTO Trade Negotiations Receive Boost From Doho Meetings

The WTO negotiators meeting in Doho were able to hammer out an agreement establishing the time-line for the next round of WTO negotiations, with a goal of concluding the round by January 1, 2005. In agriculture, the negotiators agreed to establish further agricultural trade liberalization commitments by March 31, 2003, with comprehensive schedules for implementation of those commitments to be submitted no later than January 1, 2005.

The agricultural text of the WTO ministerial declaration includes the following outline for agricultural negotiations, "Building on the work carried out to date, and without prejudging the outcome of the negotiations, we commit ourselves to comprehensive negotiations aimed at: substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support.

USDA WASDE November Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its November World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2001/02 is decreased 300,000 short tons, raw value, from last month. Beet sugar production is decreased 250,000 tons based on lower area harvested, mainly due to the 2001 Payment-In-Kind Diversion Program. Cane sugar production is decreased 50,000 tons due to lower forecast sugarcane yields in Louisiana. 2000/01 production in Louisiana is estimated at 1,579,000 tons, while 2001/02 production is projected at 1,710,000. Sugar use is decreased 75,000 tons as lower domestic food and beverage use more than offsets higher exports. The projected 2001/02 ending stocks-to-use ratio is 12.7 percent, compared with 14.1 percent last month.

For 2000/01, ending stocks are up 68,000 tons from a month earlier, based on year-end reports from processors. The ending stocks-to-use ratio is 20.4 percent, compared with 20.5 percent last month.

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ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Combine Modifications - Low Yields

In an effort to reduce the amount of cane that collects in the front of their combines Mike Robichaux and Robert "Bobby" Judice of Frank Martin Farms (near Franklin, LA) modified the front end of one of their combines. Mike has several years experience operating a two-row soldier harvester and was the backup combine operator since 1999 and is operating the harvester full time for the 2001 harvest. The standard front pickup scrolls were replaced with two scrolls from a junked two-row soldier harvester and the scrolls were mounted at somewhat less of an angle. Figure 1 is the original model, while Figure 2 is the modified version.

Mike is pleased with the results of the modification to his combine. There have been no mechanical problems with this modification other than having to replace the end-bearings and the frequency of replacement was reduced by changing the type of grease used to lubricate these bearings. Mike states, "When I harvested cane fields with shallow row middles, and the cane is down across the row, there was a tendency for the original front scrolls to shove cane to the side and not to lift the cane. As the cane was pushed back along the row it would break and start to collect on the points. Often there was no good way to clear cane from the points, and by the time the harvester got to the end of the row there could be a bundle of cane and shucks as large as a sub-compact car. This is especially true when making break-ins in the middle of a field. With the scrolls, live all the way to the end and the less aggressive angle of the scrolls the cane stalks down in the row middles are lifted and moved to the side - not just shoved to the side. I

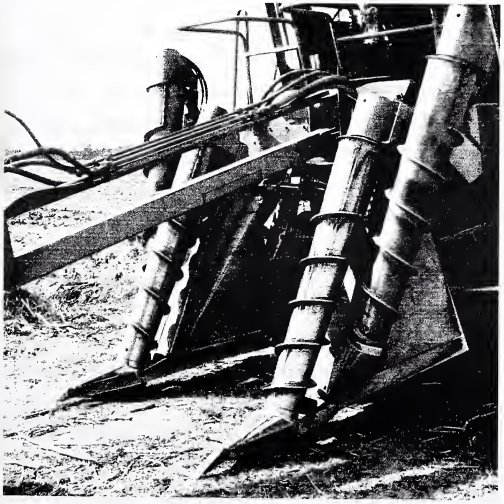


Figure 1 (Old)

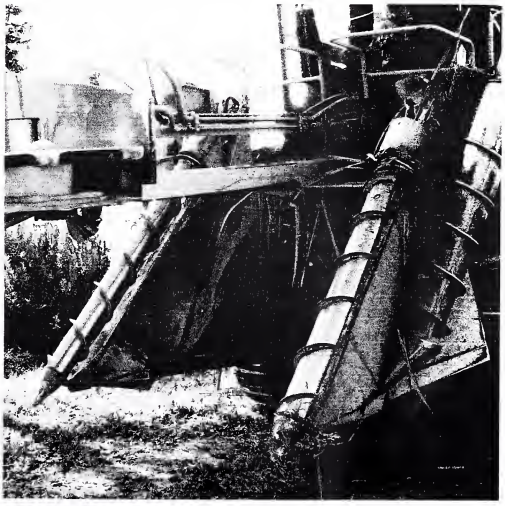


Figure 2 (New)

was harvesting one area of the farm while our other combine, which does not have the modified scrolls, was harvesting in another. The harvester operator called me on the radio and said he was having a lot of trouble making his break-ins due to cane and shucks building up on the front of his combine. I was not having any problems. We swapped locations, and when we went back to cutting cane, he again called me on the radio and said that he could hardly make it through the field. I was not having any problems in the fields that he was originally in and having so much trouble. I attribute this to the fact that the combine I was operating had the modified scrolls."

Mike also explained, "With the modified scroll harvester we seem to break less cane when we are harvesting cane which is down across the row and leaning against the harvester. We find that the modified scroll lifts the cane out of the way and it is not run over by the harvester. We think that this modification is well worth the money that was spent purchasing two used scrolls. We think that the modification to the scroll has increased productivity of the harvester and is leaving less scrap in the field."

Low Yields

The first question asked by most growers and mill managers is, "Why is the tonnage off so much?" Many growers are experiencing yields of 5 to 10% below their pre-harvest estimations. A survey of the seventeen sugar mills made on November 5 indicated a 5% reduction in the growers' crop estimate. At that date, the two mills in St. Mary Parish indicate that they were expecting an average decrease of 10%. Some growers in St. Mary Parish are now reporting that their crop may be off by 20% or more. The next question asked is, "How about LCP 85-384, is it starting to show its age and is the variety starting to decline in its yield potential?" The preliminary data (tons of cane per acre) from Outfield Tests indicates that all varieties are yielding less than they have over the last few years. This data also indicates that LCP 85-384 is still the highest yield variety of all the commercial varieties. There is a very long list of reasons why this year's yields are not as good as expected. Most of the reasons are weather related and range from not enough water early in the growing season, to too much water in the last half of the growing season. In general the largest reductions in yields are found in cane fields planted on soils with a high amount of clay in them.

In past years many growers have made comments about the lack of growth in LCP 85-384 after it lodges. Many growers believe fields of early lodged LCP 85-384 yield less than fields that are erect or fields that fall later in the year. At the end of August this year, Dr. Howard "Sonny" Viator, Director of Iberia Research Station, harvested a GPS-fertilizer test. In the spring the test field was divided into nineteen blocks, the GPS coordinates for each block were recorded and a soil sample was taken from each block. Growth and population data were collected during the summer. Each block was 1.5 acres in size. As the yield data were collected at harvest, each plot was rated for erectness with the most erect plots receiving a one rating while the worst lodged plots were rated as fours. "The plot weights ranged from a high of forty tons to a low of twenty tons of cane per acre," said Dr. Viator. He also stated, "The one thing that is obvious from the data - if the yields are sorted from the highest yielding plots to the lowest yielding plots - the plots receiving a lodging rating of four were all at the bottom of the list. We did a good job harvesting the test and no excess amount of cane is left in any of the plots."

Dr. Viator also explained, "I harvested a test this fall comparing the effect of poorly drained/badly rutted plots to plots which were well drained. In August the plots of well-drained LCP 85-384 were erect and twenty inches taller than the other plots. I was expecting to see a large difference in the yields between the two treatments. At harvest time the plots of well-drained cane were all severely lodged and I did not find nearly the difference in tonnage that I expected to find. To me this is just another indication of the loss of growth in LCP 85-384 when it is severely lodged."

Keep up the good work! At the writing of this article there are relatively few complaints about smoke and soot. Remember to follow the BMP's for Smoke Management and consider your neighbors before you light a fire.

MILLING AROUND

By Dr. Peter Rein
Audubon Sugar Institute
Louisiana State University AgCenter

How Do We Arrive at the Optimum Cane Quality Payment System?

There is again a great deal of interest in cane quality payment schemes in the Louisiana sugar industry. There is also a lot of confusion, and because of the many ramifications of changes to the present system, both processing and grower groups are wary of making changes.

There is a great need to try to simplify the issues and establish the main principles that should form the basis of a cane payment system.

The important question to answer is this:

> Question 1."Is there a different cane quality payment system, which if implemented, would improve the profitability of the industry, when considered as a single business enterprise?"

If you answer yes to this question, the next question we need to answer is this:

> Question 2. "What is the optimum cane payment system which will maximize the profitability of the Louisiana sugar industry, when considered as a single business enterprise?"

I am quite certain that the answer to the first question should be in the affirmative. I have seen many examples during my 32 years in sugar to support this. It is far more difficult to answer question 2, but I believe it is possible to derive a scheme that is pretty close to the optimum.

It is vital that both processors and growers are better off as a result of a new cane payment scheme. Therefore, once we have an answer to question 2, we will have to address the next question:

> Question 3. "Does the optimum cane payment scheme inflate the costs of the growing sector more than the costs of the processing sector, or vice versa?"

If this is the case, we should consider changing the split of proceeds between processor and grower, so that both sectors will benefit from the increased industry profitability.

Assuming the answer to question 1 is yes, we then need to move on to set the principles on which to base the answer to question 2. I would list these principles as follows, but the list is not necessarily exhaustive:

1. The system should improve the profitability of the whole industry.
2. Both growers and processors should be better off as a result of a new system.
3. Growers and processors should continue to split the proceeds from the sale of sugar on an agreed basis, so that they share the risk with regard to sugar prices. This is no change from the present.
4. The system should be simple and easy to understand.
5. There should be adequate reward to both growers and processors for their efforts.
6. The system should be fair and equitable.
7. The grower should be rewarded for his performance, good or bad, and should not be

affected by the performance of the mill to which he supplies his cane.

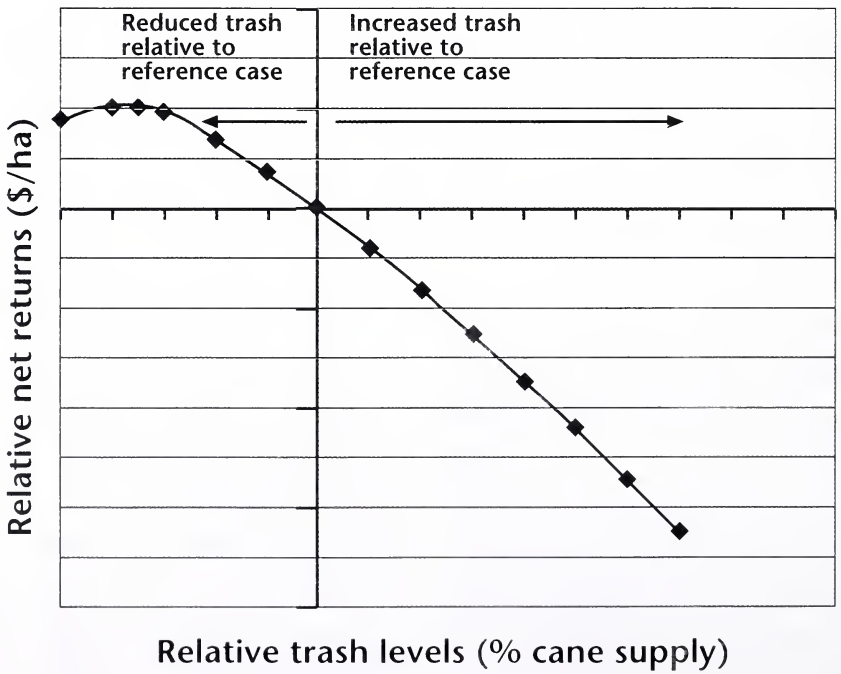
8. The processor should be rewarded for his recovery of sugar from cane, good or bad, and should not be affected by the performance of the grower supplying him cane.
9. Allowance must be made for adjustments to be made to preserve equity between processors and growers following events outside the grower's control, e.g. adverse weather conditions.

The world over, there is suspicion between sugar cane growers and processors. The way to dispel this is to accept a set of principles such as those listed above, and then test any proposals against these principles. Any system that does not pass the test must be rejected.

As a starting point, it is reasonable to assume that the system should be based on recoverable sugar in cane. The Louisiana industry is already ahead of many other industries in this respect, although a number of industries are changing to adopt some form of recoverable sugar payment. The Louisiana TRS formula is similar in concept to equations used in other cane growing industries. One may wish to make small adjustments to some of the constants in the equation, but that is not a major issue right now. The TRS formula gives us a close enough approximation to the recoverable sugar in cane.

The TRS formula, however, only considers the recovery of sugar from cane. This is very important, but does not consider costs or capacity, the costs of harvesting or milling the cane, and the effect on capacity of the harvesting, transport and processing facilities.

A joint study by the two research institutes in Australia, the SRI and the BSES, was undertaken in 1998. A model was developed in which all major costs associated with the presence of trash in the cane supply were evaluated to determine the effect on whole-of-industry returns. They found an optimum return at a low level of trash in cane; the results are shown schematically in the figure. The model indicated that "a reduction in harvester pour rate will reduce the level of trash in the cane supply and produce an increase in net returns for the industry as a whole."


Reduced trash relative to reference case
Increased trash relative to reference case
Relative net returns ($/ha)
Relative trash levels (% cane supply)

The optimum level of trash is likely to be somewhat different in different areas, depending on cost structures. How do we determine the optimum in the absence of a model? The answer lies in setting the correct economic incentives for both growers and processor, and letting economic forces drive the process to the optimum.

The cost of crushing cane is proportional to the weight of cane processed. If there is more or less recoverable sugar in the cane, the grower will be paid accordingly. But within reasonable limits, the processor should be paid for the weight of cane crushed. This is a good starting assumption for a payment system. Assume, too, that the average processor will recover an amount of sugar from the cane equivalent to the TRS, i.e. a liquidation factor of 100.

Therefore, the cane payment formula should take the following form for the price/ton paid to the grower:

$$P (\$/\text{ton cane}) = S(\$/\text{ton sugar}) \times \text{TRS \% Cane}/100 - PF(\$/\text{ton cane}) \quad (1)$$

where PF is the Processing Fee paid to the processor for crushing each ton of cane, and S is the average price received per ton of sugar produced.

The Processing Fee must be related to the price of sugar, so that the processor shares the risk (or reward) of a low (or high) sugar price. Then the equation should be re-written as:

$$P(\$/\text{ton cane}) = S(\$/\text{ton sugar}) \times [\text{TRS \% cane} - PF^1]/100 \quad (2)$$

How do we arrive at the magnitude of the Processing Fee? This is done using the required split of proceeds from sugar sales between grower and processor. It can be shown that

$$PF^1 = \text{TRS \% cane}_{av.} (100-G) / 100 \quad (3)$$

where G = percentage of proceeds going to the grower and TRS % $cane_{av.}$ is the average value of TRS % cane over the period being considered (probably a year). If on average the required split is 60:40 between grower and processor, and the average TRS % cane is 10.0 (i.e. 200lb sugar / ton cane) for the mill being considered, the value of PF^1 in the equation above should be chosen so that the ratio of [TRS % cane – PF^1]: PF^1 is 60:40. This requires a value of PF^1 of 4.0, so that the required split is achieved. This can also be calculated from equation (3), which can be used to calculate PF^1 if the grower/processor split is different from what is assumed here. Then equation (2) becomes:

$$P(\$/\text{ton cane}) = S (\$/\text{ton sugar}) [\text{TRS \% cane} - 4.0]/100 \quad (4)$$

What are the implications of such a payment formula? They are not obvious, and are most easily shown by some numerically worked examples. But the main implications are as follows:

a. If a grower increases the TRS in his cane above the average (10.0 in this case), he keeps the full value of the extra TRS in cane, instead of sharing it with the processor. On the reverse side, if his TRS is lower than average, he gets paid less, but the processor still gets the same amount per ton of cane crushed.
b. If the processor recovers more sugar from the cane than the TRS formula predicts, he keeps the full value of the extra sugar recovered; he does not have to share it with the growers. Conversely, if the mill recovery is worse then average, the growers supplying that mill are not affected.
c. The absolute value of TRS % cane for each grower is now very important, as cane analysis figures are not just used for assessing the distribution of growers' proceeds, but now become the absolute basis for payment to growers. Growers and processors may wish this analysis to be audited to ensure that it is done accurately.

This approach takes into account recovery and costs. What about capacity? If the effect of improving overall returns is to drive the industry to better cane quality, as the Australian model predicts, it may well reduce the harvesting rate of the machines, which could reduce the capacity of the harvesters. However, less tons of cane would need to be transported to the mill with benefits for transport capacity. The mill would be able to get

through the crop in a shorter period of time. There are many implications, and it does not seem possible to take capacity explicitly into account in a cane payment formula. The cost of capital should be accounted for implicitly in the costs that drive the process to the economic optimum.

Is this the only option for a cane payment system? Certainly not. But most others introduce bonuses and penalties that are arbitrarily set, and which, therefore, are not readily agreed to by processors and growers.

The system outlined here is essentially the same as the payment system in Australia. It has been in force there since 1915 with very little change. It has served them very well over the years, and I believe is largely responsible for the high level of efficiency evident in the Australian industry. They assess recoverable sugar in terms of CCS (commercial cane sugar) rather than TRS, and their cane payment equation is:

$$P(\$/\text{ton cane}) = S(\$/\text{ton sugar}) \times \text{coefficient of work} \times [CCS-4] / 100 \quad (5)$$

where the coefficient of work is similar in concept to a liquidation factor.

One issue in relation to cane payment that is not addressed here is the issue of soil in cane. This will be the subject of another article some time in the future. It is very important and needs to be considered at the same time as a new cane payment system.

What are the consequences of implementing the right cane payment system in Louisiana? Some of them (not necessarily all) are listed below:

- Most importantly the profitability of the industry will improve.
- The productivity of the industry in terms of tons sugar/acre and production cost per ton sugar will improve.
- Sugar quality will improve as cane quality improves.
- The cane/sugar ratio will improve, I estimate, from the present 10:1 to 9:1 tons cane/ton sugar.
- Growers keep the full benefit of anything they do to improve the TRS content of the cane, whether through the adoption of better varieties or improved practices or increased inputs of ripeners or other chemicals.
- The milling sector will become more efficient as they keep the full value of higher sugar recovery arising from improved operations or investment in plant and equipment.

Apart from the issue of soil in cane, the other issue needing discussion is that listed as principle number 9: how do we preserve equity between processor and grower, and among growers, in the face of uncontrollable factors - primarily, adverse weather conditions? Perhaps the system should just be suspended under defined adverse weather conditions, but this may not be the best option. Perhaps the Processing Fee should be reduced during these periods, because of the lower TRS % cane in these times, according to equation (3). I am sure enough creativity exists amongst the members of this industry to arrive at an adequate solution.

I hope this article helps the understanding of some of the issues and prompts new ideas and constructive debate, followed by productive action. The worst thing we can do is to do nothing.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

By James F. Coerver, P.E.
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Environmental Tax Increase Alert

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) is yet again the target of severe criticism by environmentalists, and these complaints are all gleefully and enthusiastically reported in the news media. Some of these media events, such as the unreported detection of vinyl chloride in a trailer park water supply, were not due to any misdeed or omission by LDEQ, but because that agency could not determine immediately the source of contamination, a difficult if not impossible task, it is taking a grossly unfair share of the emotional and mostly irrational criticisms. That agency is also regularly panned by the environmentalists for issuing permits they oppose, even after LDEQ determines the applicants have complied with all lawful requirements and such issuances are entirely appropriate. However, when it came to light recently that LDEQ did indeed withhold notifying affected property owners in another Louisiana location that LDEQ tests indicated private water wells were probably contaminated by a nearby refinery operation, much of that agency's credibility was destroyed.

Another media battlefront is an environmentalist petition for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to take back the authority granted to LDEQ to administer the NPDES permitting program. Environmentalists are not satisfied that enough fines are being imposed by LDEQ nor that enough industrial plants are being put out of business. However, the NPDES program involves so much useless, unnecessary, redundant and complicated monitoring and reporting that there is no way the State could ever afford to run the program the way environmentalists want it run. The State of Louisiana would actually be much better off if EPA did take back the NPDES program because of the financial burden, and the environment would benefit because LDEQ would be relieved of an enormous paperwork burden, and more staff effort could be devoted to doing actual stream pollution abatement work. But don't look for anything like that to happen because EPA certainly does not want the monkey on its back. The EPA does not have authority to impose permit fees, and does not have funding or staffing to do the job as specified in EPA's NPDES regulations.

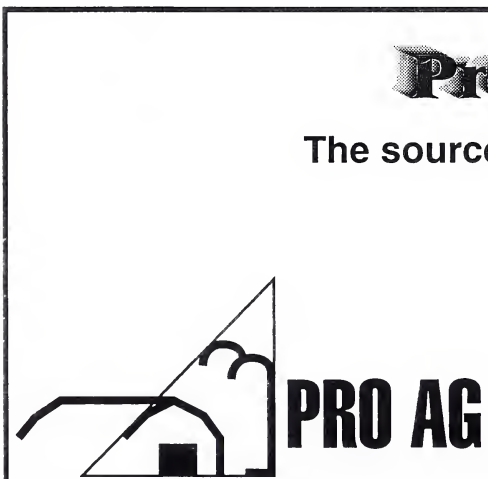
An enormous amount of money is spent by the State in operating the water pollution control program, including administration of Federal/State NPDES permits. This money is derived primarily from fees charged for NPDES/LPDES permits and a lesser and varying amount of Federal subsidies. LDEQ got authority to charge such fees as a prerequisite for acquiring Federal NPDES authority, which was a bad idea to begin with, and LDEQ has been abusing that authority by raising fees at every opportunity. For the typical sugar mill, these fees grew from none in 1979 to over $25,000 per year by 1995. When, in 1995, LDEQ announced its intent to increase the already bloated fees by 79 percent, it

became obvious to the Legislature that the monster it created was out of control. Act 1005 of 1995 placed a limit on such fee increases to a maximum of eight percent per year. Predictably, fees have increased by at least eight percent annually since 1995. More and more of this permit fee money is going to fund LDEQ activities unrelated to NPDES matters such as "Environmental Justice" and other environmental boondoggling.

At an October 22, 2001 meeting with the Press Club of Baton Rouge, the Secretary of LDEQ defended that agency's recent performance, advising that the agency's $115 million budget is inadequate and that more money is needed for the agency "just to be able to tread water". He is also quoted in *The Advocate* as saying he plans to talk to Governor Foster about increasing fees (i.e., taxes) paid by industry and local governments. This is not surprising, of course, since the typical bureaucratic response in such a situation is to request more money to spend rather than cut unnecessary expenditures and increase efficiency.

While an early warning of another tax attack is commendable, this is no time to be asking for a tax increase. A President was just elected on a tax cutting promise, and Congress is compelled to produce an economic incentive package to salvage an economy headed into the tank. Sugar mills and municipalities on the verge of insolvency simply cannot afford more taxes. Certainly no more money is needed for the amply funded water pollution control program, particularly when one considers that the very costly "TMDL" initiative is on hold for at least another year, and may be drastically reduced. Furthermore, isn't funding the current war on terrorism more important than added environmental boondoggling?

If indeed the Governor and Legislature are convinced that more money is really needed for environmental initiatives not directly related to permitting activities, these funds should come from general tax funds of the State rather than placing the tax burden on already overtaxed permit holders. Hopefully, they will get the message.



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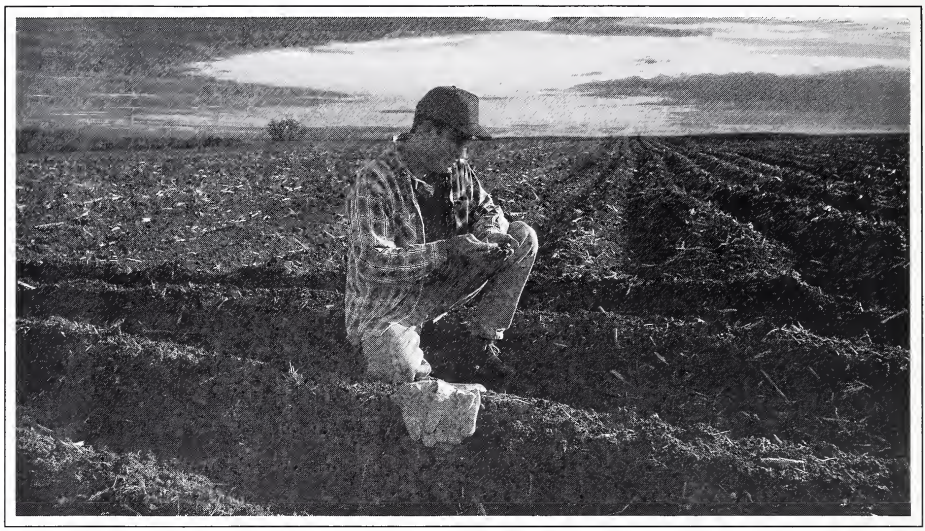

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THE SUGAR BULLETIN

Official Bulletin of the American Sugar Cane League of the U.S.A.

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Computer User's Group Meeting Agenda

February 4, 2002 - Thibodaux, LA - Howard Johnson

9:00 - 10:00	Welcome & Overview of new Farmworks Software
10:00 - 10:30	Calibrating Maps and Mapping Techniques
10:30 - 10:40	**BREAK**
10:40 - 11:30	Mapping - Cont'd.
11:30 - 12:00	New Handheld GPS and Site Mate Software
12:00 - 1:00	**LUNCH**
1:00 - 1:30	How to keep records and generate reports
1:30 - 2:00	Using Layers in Sugarcane
2:00 - 2:30	Using the new "Calculator" Tool and the "Show Me" function
2:30 - 2:40	**BREAK**
2:40 - 3:00	More "Show Me" Tools info.
3:00 - 4:00	Farmworks & Excel Spreadsheets
4:00 - 4:30	Question & Answers

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Early End of Grinding - Farm Bill
Stuffed Molasses/Circumvention Language

Like most news, there is always the good news / bad news aspect of any message. The end of grinding is near for the majority of the industry. In fact, most of the mills should be closed before you read this article. Many, even before Christmas. That, I guess should be categorized as the good news. A relatively dry grinding also helped to keep operating cost down. On the other hand, the crop has fallen short of expectations and estimations in many areas of the belt. The latest revised estimate, at the time of my writing this, was approximately 10% off the original estimate for the crop. That estimate is "belt" wide. In some areas, however, the crop was off anywhere from 20-30% for some. Maybe more. That can get awfully stressful. While the sugar may have been up, somewhat, in these areas, I don't think it was up enough to offset the tonnage deficit. The one thing that is for certain, is that the good Lord has a way of reminding us of who really is in charge!

Farm Bill

As I write this article, the U.S. Senate is debating the Harkin Farm Bill. Yesterday, December 11, there was a vote on the dairy section of the bill. It was, in my mind, a bell weather for whether this Farm Bill legislation would be successful, or whether there might be a stormy process. Particularly, whether we would have problems with the sugar section on the floor of the Senate. While the vote has not taken place, as I write this article, I am willing to wager that things should go relatively smoothly from here on out. However, the big question is "when will a conference committee convene to negotiate the final bill between the House and the Senate?" The Republican leadership is suggesting it happen immediately. Before the Congress (or Senate) adjourns for the holidays. While at the same time, the Bush Administration has been opposed to passage of a bill this year. The Democrats, on the other hand have indicated that they will conference on the bill after the Christmas / New Year Holiday. For some sectors of the ag community, it really needs to occur before the end of January because of the need to arrange financing for next year's crops, if for no other reason. So, we will just have to wait and see who prevails in this "standoff." I'll just hope that it doesn't get dicey along the way.

Stuffed Molasses/Circumvention Language

It use to be called "stuffed molasses." Then, after the successful court appeal, Senator John Breaux began a redraft of "circumvention" language to attempt to close the loophole(s) in present law that was allowing company(s) to circumvent the quota system, as we know it. Well, after two years of waiting for a legislative instrument to attach to, Senator Breaux was able to amend the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, a bill that was germane to the subject. I guess, after all of the times the League's members have inquired about the status of this action, we can finally say, "it's done!" Now, all that is left is final passage of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act in early 2002.

The Three Legged Stool

I didn't know what else to title this part, but I guess The Three Legged Stool is somewhat appropriate. I guess I could have called it The Triumvirate, except that it is not about a ruling body of three people. What I am referring to,

however, is the three concerns that confront, or have confronted, our domestic sugar industry. A viable sugar program, stuffed molasses/ circumvention, and the NAFTA-Mexican dispute. While the domestic sugar industry labored to reach consensus on a sugar program that might actually work for everyone, the industry was confronted with the passage of a bill that may impose marketing allotments. Allotments applied while we could still be facing the issue of stuffed molasses/circumvention, and the NAFTA Mexican dispute, and no control on Mexican sugar interest. It was, and I guess still is to a lesser extent, of some concern. While we aren't completely out of the woods yet, I would like to report that one element is done. I.e. stuffed molasses/circumvention. The second element, a Farm Bill, is very close to completion and should be finished or going to Conference Committee by the time you read this, and the discussions about, and with Mexico, are progressing.

With two items "technically" done, the next item that has also been on the front burner is Mexico. Jackie Theriot is one of four people participating in all of the meetings surrounding the Mexico issue. The level of activity between our industries and our governments are increasing. We are told that PEMEX, the Mexican oil monopoly operation, has signed off on a sugar for ethanol project in that country. And, that could be the first of the good news. It is our hope that meaningful discussion and action can take place over the next several months that might provide for a resolution of the NAFTA dispute. But, in the meantime, the hard work of our Washington reps, your League leadership, and the support from the membership, has moved us steadily, in what we truly believe is the right direction. Just like the weather, we can't control everything. But, I feel that decisions we have made through the process, even though sometimes others, and our own selves, may have questioned some of our own rationales, it appears to have worked out for the best. Let's all keep our fingers crossed, say a few prayers, hope that we continue to make good decisions, and the light at the end of this tunnel could start showing brighter. Keep the faith. I think we're close!

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Update - Breaux-Thomas Attach Circumvention Language To Trade Bill - USDA WASDE December Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

At the time of this writing, the Senate was engaged in partisan debate on the farm bill, while Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) put the finishing touches on the bill. While the sugar provisions remain virtually unchanged, with the exception of a "new farmer" provision to accommodate California, the bill, as a whole, has been significantly re-worked since the committee approved the bill in mid-November. Additional dairy, rice and conservation spending has been included to ensure that Harkin has the votes to approve the bill, but the situation remains cloudy. Senators Thad Cochran (R-MS) and Pat Roberts (R-KS) have put together a bill that has the support of most Republicans and the Bush Administration, but the Senators have been unsuccessful in wooing Democrats to their cause. This is due, in part, to Harkin's repeated efforts to find and fix the problems in his bill that might lead other Democrats to cross the aisle.

Compromises on conservation and dairy seem to have eliminated the concern about disputes within those sectors holding up the bill, but there is growing concern that some sort of strict payment limitation language could be viewed positively by a majority of the Senators. Further, Senator Dick Lugar (R-IN), ranking Republican on the Agriculture Committee, is expected to offer amendments to dramatically increase nutrition spending by slashing farm program spending. The biggest problem, though, is the lack of bipartisanship at this crucial stage in farm policy development. With a scant few days left to approve the bill before Congress departs for the holiday recess, leadership from farm-state Senators is essential.

Due to the hard work of our sugar-state Senators, an amendment by Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) designed to kill the sugar program was beaten back by a 71-29 margin, the largest such margin in recent memory. The measure was strongly opposed by Democrats (41-9) and a majority of Republicans (29-20), with independent Senator Jim Jeffords (VT) also voting in opposition. Senator Gregg's amendment would have changed the loan program from a non-recourse program to a recourse program (i.e., eliminating the ability to forfeit on the loan) and reduced the sugar loan rate annually until the loan rate reached $0 in 2006. Further, the amendment would have eliminated authority for marketing quotas and allotments. Senators John Breaux (D-LA) and Mary Landrieu (D-LA) spoke forcefully on behalf of Louisiana sugar and their leadership was pivotal in blocking the Gregg amendment. When the opportunity arises, please express our appreciation for their energetic defense of the sugar program.

Breaux-Thomas Attach Circumvention Language To Trade Bill

Senator John Breaux (D-LA) led a successful effort to amend the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act during Senate Finance Committee deliberations to stop circumvention of the quotas on imports of sugar, syrups and sugar-containing products. The provision maintains the integrity of the tariff-rate quotas on sugars, syrups, and

sugar-containing products by stopping circumvention as soon as it becomes apparent; not later than 30 days after the date of enactment and on a regular basis thereafter. The Secretary of Agriculture is required to identify imports of articles that are circumventing tariff-rate quotas on sugars, syrups, or sugar-containing products imposed under Chapters 17, 18, 19, or 21 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States, and report to the President the articles found to be circumventing the tariff-rate quotas.

The President is required to proclaim that any article identified by the Secretary shall be included in the appropriate tariff-rate quota provision of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule. No imports are affected unless and until the Secretary identifies circumvention and the President issues a proclamation. Imports of sugar-related products for legitimate commercial applications in the United States, such as molasses used for animal feed or for rum, would not be affected by this legislation.

Breaux was joined by Senator Craig Thomas (R-WY) in offering the amendment, which was approved by a voice vote. The bill is likely to be considered by the Senate early in 2002, possibly in combination with the Trade Promotion Authority bill passed by the House in early December.

USDA WASDE December Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its December World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2001/02 is decreased 20,000 short tons, raw value, from last month, due to a drop in cane sugar estimates. Beet sugar production is unchanged. 2000/01 production in Louisiana is unchanged at 1,579,000 tons, while 2001/02 production remains at 1,710,000. Sugar use is also unchanged, resulting in a slight reduction in the projected 2001/02 ending stocks-to-use ratio to 12.5 percent, compared to 12.7 percent last month. For 2000/01, the ending stocks-to-use ratio is 20.4 percent, unchanged from last month.

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ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Condolences to Dr. Ed Richard - Plant Cane Field Conditions - ASSCT Annual Meeting - Year's End

Joyce Richard, the wife of Dr. Ed Richard passed away on December 5, 2001. In this time of grief the membership and the staff of the American Sugar Cane League extend our heart felt condolences to Ed and his family.

Plant Cane

Most of the cane planted this fall is looking good at this time. There are still a few fields that have less than perfect stands . . . Some fields were planted with whole stalk seed and some with billet seed. A number of these fields were planted before the heavy rains. The torrent of rain packed the soil and made the tops of the rows nearly as hard as concrete. Individual growers tried to improve stands by running rolling cultivators on top of the rows. In a few fields a little soil was removed and stands improved slightly. However, in most cases there is no visual improvement in the amount of cane marking the rows. For the most part, there are no long gaps, just thin stands. These fields will make only a fair plant cane crop, but knowing LCP 85-384's ability to thicken its stand with age, their stubble crops should be good.

Over the years of testing billet plantings, there have ***not*** been any winters in which established stands of cane were killed to the ground by a series of freezes in the months of January, February, and March. If these environmental conditions occur, the cane would have to draw nourishment from the mother stalk to reestablish itself. Dr. Jeff Hoy, Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology-LSU Ag Center, is concerned by this scenario. He has the lead research in planting billeted seed cane. In the test work done by Dr. Hoy, observations of the seed pieces indicate that by the time spring arrives there is little or no food reserve in the billet seed segments. Red rot and other diseases have destroyed many of the billets planted as seed. Dr. Hoy thinks that it is important for the stands to be well established before the first killing freeze of winter. The more established a shoot of cane is, with own roots and a small food reserve, the more likely it will be able to come back in the spring. The second thing to remember is that there are no reserve eyes left to germinate in the spring. When seed cane is chopped into billets all of the eyes germinate at one time, with whole stalk seed, only about half of the eyes germinate in the fall. If there is a winter freeze, there will still be a reserve of eyes for spring germination. We are just now starting to gather data on the relationship between the planting dates of billeted seed and its yields. There were some demonstration type plantings that did **not** indicate any advantage in planting billets early, and late September planting have done well in most cases. However, the winters of the past few years have been relatively mild without a series of freezes. A survey of the acreage planted with billeted seed has not been completed yet, but one can be certain that more acres were planted with billets this than in previous years. Growers must realize there is a possibility that, with the wrong kind of winter, the loss of billeted planted cane could be greater than that of whole stalk planted cane. Many growers are evaluating billet planting on their

own farms now, but mostly without whole stalk to compare to. Each year provides us with valuable information about the dependability of billet planting.

Growers are reminded to report their seed cane acreage!

Field Conditions

All indications are that poorly drained fields of LCP 85-384 do not yield at their maximum potential. Nearly all of the last half of the 2000 harvest was wet and growers were forced to make ruts in their best cane. Badly rutted and poorly drained fields may have contributed to the lower than expected yields of the 2001 harvest. At the writing of this article on December 10, other than at the very start of harvest, there has been only about a week or two of wet harvest and the vast majority of fields are not rutted. Fields which were rutted should be drained as soon as possible. Fields should not go through winter with water standing in them.

The main reasons for cultivation are drainage (sinking the water furrows), weed control, to fill in ruts and to prepare the row for fertilization. In plant cane, where the row is not washed away by winter rains and a good herbicide program was followed, it is a common practice not to cultivate until it is time for fertilization. With so few rutted fields some growers are wondering if they could save a few dollars and does no harm to their yields for the 2002 crop by not cultivating stubble fields. In discussing this practice with growers, consultants, and researches, none of them could give this author any real disadvantages to this practice. All agreed that if the cane trash was burned, drains were run, and quickly followed up with a herbicide application, that is a way to save a few bucks.

ASSCT Annual Meeting

Growers and processors are reminded that the annual meeting of the Louisiana Division of ASSCT is to be held in Baton Rouge at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center. The dates for the meeting are Tuesday and Wednesday, February 26-27, 2002. The business session will be held Tuesday morning beginning at 9:30 a.m. The technical manufacturing session will be held Tuesday afternoon, and the technical agricultural secession will be held Wednesday morning. These meetings are always very informative and most of the time fun is had by all. For additional information contact Denver Loupe at 225-578-6930 or visit the ASSCT website at www.assct.org .

Year's End

Most researchers have finished their field work and are now back in their offices crunching numbers and trying to decide what they have accomplished during 2001. For many of us, the research that we do could not be accomplished without the outstanding cooperation that we receive from many growers, mills, equipment manufactures, and chemical suppliers. On behalf of all of us - many, many thanks to you all.

May the new year bring the best of all things to you. These are the sincere wishes from all of the staff at the American Sugar Cane League to all of you!

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By Dr. Peter Rein
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REDUCING LOSSES IN THE FILTER STATION

With the on-going focus on improving efficiencies and reducing losses, losses of sugar in filter cake, as well as other losses occurring in the filter station, need some attention. The filter station is often a neglected part of a sugar factory, only receiving attention when it threatens to become a bottleneck to production.

What are the other losses, apart from the measured loss of sugar in cake? These are often overlooked, because they are generally not considered to be significant. They are the losses due to microbiological causes and physical loss of sugar due to entrainment of filtrate into the vacuum system. These causes can easily account for percentage points of loss of sugar in juice, and often go undetected.

Losses of Sugar in Filtercake

These losses may be larger than they should be because of a lack of filter capacity, or due to limitations on wash water usage as a consequence of insufficient evaporator capacity. A number of Louisiana factories have an installed capacity of less than 5.5 ft^2 of installed filtering area per short ton cane/hour, a typical capacity parameter.

Some filter stations do not have enough capacity because they are not operated correctly. The most significant way to improve capacity is to ensure that there is sufficient bagacillo available as a filter aid to be mixed with the mud. The provision of an adequate supply of bagacillo is also a neglected aspect of sugar mill operation. In times of bad weather the amount of soil coming in with the cane can double the load on the filters. However, the provision of sufficient bagacillo can reduce the specific cake resistance, which relates to filter capacity, by a factor of 10, a far more significant effect.

A further little known fact is that filter capacity is higher with thin muds (about 3 to 4% solids in mud) than with thick muds. Thus, a further way to improve capacity is to process a thinner mud.

But the most important factor is this: **the bagacillo ratio (100 x mass dry bagacillo / mass dry clarifier muds) should be above 80%.**

Provision of sufficient bagacillo not only improves the capacity of the filters, but also improves the filter retention, and hence, the quality of the filtrate. Use of a finer bagacillo (passing through a 0.85mm screen) can help to improve the quality of the filtrate, but will not affect capacity or losses.

Another important issue overlooked in Louisiana factories is the fact that pumping mud in centrifugal pumps destroys the floc carefully formed in the clarifier, which greatly reduces the filterability of the mud. Attempts are made in most Louisiana mills to add flocculant to the feed to the filters after pumping the mud, to re-form the floc particles. This, however, is a costly and unnecessary operation if pumping of filter feed can be eliminated. This can only be done by modifying the plant, and may not be possible at all if there is insufficient head between the clarifier mud outlets and the filter boots.

In point form, these are the issues that need attention in order to reduce the sugar loss in cake:

- Ensure a bagacillo ratio of >80% (100 x bagacillo dry solids / clarifier mud solids)

- Aim for a mud solids % in clarifier mud of around 4%. Thinner muds lead to better results.
- Have 2 levels of vacuum on the filters, a pick-up vacuum of about 6" to 8" Hg and a filtering vacuum of about 18" Hg.
- Check that external filtrate piping to the receiver is not undersized, leading to a pressure drop between filter and filtrate receiver.
- Check that the filters do not spill filtrate onto the cake at discharge.
- Ensure washwater is hot (>176 °F or 80 °C) and applied in a uniform fine spray. If necessary, install a strainer in line.
- If possible add enough water to ensure a filter wash index (i.e. ratio of mixed juice/clear juice brix) of >100%.
- Avoid pumping mud whenever possible, and eliminate recirculation of mud.

Mills should aim for 1% pol in cake or better. This may not be immediately achievable for a variety of reasons, but on average, the attainment of this target by the industry would increase sugar production by 16,000 tons/year, or 1% of annual production.

Losses Due to Microbiological Causes:

It has been shown that microorganisms are active in clarifier muds at temperatures around 200 °F. This is unexpected, but can be significant.

It is well known, however, that at temperatures below 70 °C or 160 °F, hyperthermophiles are active, destroying sucrose, and forming amongst other products, lactic acid. The mud handling systems tend to operate at around these temperatures, and if attempts are made to ensure that mud temperatures are kept above this temperature limit, microbiological losses can be prevented.

Tracer tests have revealed that mud residence times in a clarifier can extend to well over one hour, particularly if attempts are made to "thicken" the muds. As pointed out above, thick muds are not desirable, and attempts should be made to reduce mud residence times in the clarifier. A good operating policy which limits excessive residence times is the control of the temperature of the mud being drawn from the clarifier. If the mud temperature drops below, say, 96 °C or 205 °F, it has been in the clarifier too long and should be withdrawn more rapidly.

It is difficult to keep filter mud temperatures high if a large mud tank is used and the pumping and/or recirculating of muds is practiced. Some mills have used direct steam injection into the filter mud boots to raise temperatures. A better approach is to eliminate the mud tank and pump from the circuit, and gravity feed clarifier mud to a small mud/bagacillo mixer, and then directly by gravity to the filters, which have level controls (no overflow) fitted to the mud boots.

So losses due to microbiological losses can be minimized by doing the following:

- Ensure mud temperatures from the clarifier do not fall below 205 °F.
- Keep temperatures of mud in the filters above 160 °F.
- Ensure filter wash water temperature is kept above 170 °F.
- Use hot washwater (>176 °F) on the filters.
- Change the system to eliminate pumping of mud and eliminate the mud tank from normal use.
- If this is not possible, minimize the amount of mud held in the mud tank, and keep temperatures above 160 °F.

The magnitude of degradation losses can be gauged from lactic acid measurements around the filter station. Alternatively, the purity difference between clear juice and filtrate could be monitored. The purity difference should ideally be below 1 unit, but certainly less than 2 units. If you choose this approach, ensure that the samples are not allowed to degrade before measurement; they should be analyzed immediately after sampling.

Physical Losses of Sugar in the Filter Station

These are caused mainly by inadequate or ineffective entrainment prevention arrangements, or inadequate or inefficient filtrate pumps. The

pumping of filtrate is a difficult duty, as the liquid being pumped is close to its boiling point at the reduced absolute pressure, and the net positive suction head available is low. The pump needs to be carefully chosen and properly installed for this duty. Very often too, a pump is expected to handle larger quantities than it was originally designed for.

The consequence of ineffective pumping is entrainment of filtrate. Entrainment separators on this duty are often rudimentary and ineffective, and operators often have no idea of when or how much entrainment is occurring. A well designed entrainment system in which you can see entrained liquid being returned is essential.

Ways to overcome this type of loss are:

- Ensure a vacuum breaker is installed on the filtrate tank in the event that the filtrate level in the tank rises too high.
- Ensure the right pump(s) for the duty is installed, and that suction vent pipes are installed and kept open.
- Re-evaluate the design and capacity of the entrainment separator in use.
- Ensure that the entrainment return line has a sight glass and a U-leg seal between the entrainment separator and the filtrate receiver.

Targets and Benchmarks

In the early 70's, loss of pol in cake represented 0.5% of pol in cane in South Africa. Subsequently this figure has dropped to 0.2%, but this is partly due to the widespread use of diffusers. A target of 0.5% of pol in cane lost in filter cake seems reasonable. This is a gain of just over 1% in recovery. It corresponds roughly with a pol in cake content of about 1%.

Losses from microbiological and physical losses can sometimes be of the order of 2-3% of the pol in cane, i.e. higher than the loss of pol in cake. The problem is that they are not easily detected. In a well designed and well operated plant, their losses should be close to zero, and the target should be the elimination of these losses altogether.

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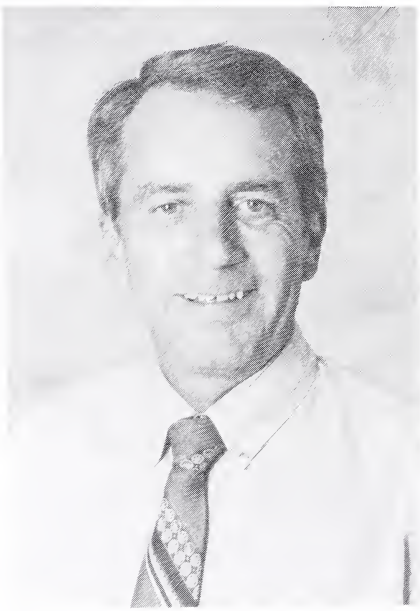

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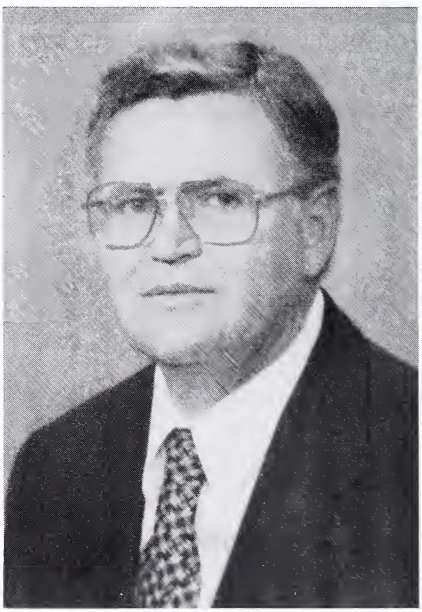

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ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

By James F. Coerver, P.E.
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IS BIOENERGY OPPORTUNITY KNOCKING?

The Baton Rouge *Sunday Advocate* of December 2, 2001, reports that the Senate version of the farm bill, now under consideration, would provide more than $100 million a year in new subsidies for "bioenergy" development. Further, some $75 million over five years is set aside for construction of new refineries for the production of crop-based fuels, and some farm interests are obviously pleased. From the environmental and national security viewpoints, this would be a move in the right direction. However, the promoters of this initiative are interested primarily in converting biomass into ethanol; this may not be the most efficient and economical way to exploit the fuel value of biomass such as crop stubble, bagasse, rice husks, etc.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with making ethanol (fuel) from biomass. Unfortunately most of the ethanol (fuel) now produced is made from corn at a cost of $40 a barrel (compared to crude oil), and it takes much energy (tractor fuel) to produce corn and more energy to manufacture ethanol from corn. Of course, undercutting the $40 cost is what the promoters of this initiative seek to accomplish. While shaving a few bucks off the $40 a barrel cost, and using crop stubble that would ordinarily be wasted rather than expensive and useful corn, is certainly an appealing idea when imported oil prices are high, but it may be hard to sell the idea in the face of prevailing oil prices in the $20 a barrel price range. However, it is unwise to expect oil prices to stay low for very long, and since much of this national oil supply is imported, national security interests would be best served by developing such domestic energy resources rather than importing.

The events associated with 9/11/01 bring into question the real cost of imported oil, most of which comes from the vicinity of the Persian Gulf. Reportedly, it costs as little as $5 per barrel to produce oil in that vicinity. Add a dollar or two for transportation costs and even at the current deflated $20 a barrel price, an enormous amount of oil profits flow to the Persian Gulf vicinity, and much more when OPEC is successful in extorting higher prices. Much of this oil money has been and may still be finding its way into the coffers of international terrorists and other troublemakers. Thus, the real cost of imported oil is much higher than the posted price, and arguably much higher than the current $40 price of corn-based ethanol when all of the costs for the present and previous wars on local and international terrorism are factored in.

The sugarcane industry already plays a significant role in the bioenergy arena. For instance, a sugar mill that processes one million tons of sugarcane per year produces in bagasse fuel the equivalent of about 420,000 barrels of imported crude oil. Actually, if this example mill incorporates reasonable heat conservation measures, this is more than enough bagasse fuel to operate the sugar mill and cogenerate electricity, all without the expense of converting bagasse biomass to ethanol. If that same mill, perhaps in cooperation with neighboring mills and farmers, were to also collect cane tops, leaves and chaff so as to provide additional biomass

boiler fuels, electric power for sale could be produced, post-harvest, and further reduce the need for imported oil.

The use of biomass as a fuel to generate electricity for sale is not a new idea. One Louisiana firm has for 20 years been producing over 10 megawatts of electric power year-round using only rice husks as fuel. Before construction of this plant, most rice husks were "disposed" of by burning wind-rowed piles, creating a notorious smoke nuisance and health hazard.

Would it not be in the best interests of the sugar industry to seek some of the prospective "bioenergy" money to develop the power boiler fuel concept? If a profit can be made, a smoke nuisance eliminated, and the need for imported oil reduced, would that not be in the nation's best security interests?

2002 TEXAS BUS TRIP

To Interested La Sugar Industry Personnel:

The League is sponsoring a bus trip to the Texas sugar industry. The date of the trip is March 3 - March 8. We estimate the cost to be under $600.

Our tentative itinerary has the group spending a day to visit the sites of San Antonio, two days near the Mexican border to tour agriculture in the Rio Grande Valley, with a stop in Houston for a tour yet to be decided.

Your cost for the trip will include bus fare, hotel accommodations, site seeing tour(s), and beverages for the ride. Additional costs to you would be your meals and other entertainment.

Seating will be limited. If you are interested in participating in this educational, yet mildly fun tour, please complete and return the form below with a $100 deposit per person so we can reserve your seat. When a full bus is achieved, a waiting list will be kept in the event of cancellations.

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THE BATON ROUGE LINE

By Tom Spradley
Spradley & Spradley

HARVEST DRAWING FEW COMPLAINTS GROUND WATER TASK FORCE OFF AND RUNNING

Interviews with sugar area legislators indicate that they are getting fewer complaints this year than ever before. Billet cut cane and enlightened loading procedures have reduced trash on the road. Some lawmakers are receiving a few complaints, but not like in the past.

Burning complaints are greatly reduced also. Burning practices have improved and there seems to be much less burning in general, and this results in a lot less smoke and some fewer smoke complaints, and much happier legislators.

GROUND WATER TASK FORCE OFF AND RUNNING

The Ground Water Advisory Commission Task Force has begun hearings intended to report ground water policy to the legislature for possible legislation. The initial legislation creating the Task Force intended to gather data about the situation regarding the health of the state's aquifers and to offer the lawmakers suggestions on how to correct any problems they find. After that the Task Force is supposed to expire.

A questionnaire will be circulated among major users of well water to determine:

a. Do you use surface water, ground water or both?
b. How much of each?
c. What do you use the water to do?
d. If forced to switch from ground water to surface water could you? And how much would the conversion cost?

The legislation creating the Task Force was originally proposed to prevent electric merchant plants and commercial water bottling companies from using up the water we need for other purposes. The priorities set in the Louisiana law are household and municipal ahead of agricultural and industrial use. This could lead to a situation where there is enough water to irrigate your lawn but not enough to keep the mill open.

California and Florida have fairly strong water policy, but their laws put certain industrial and agricultural uses ahead of municipal and personal uses, in some cases, and take into consideration the seasonal nature of some demand for water, such as harvest season.

Agri and industrial users are meeting to develop a list of factors to present to the Task Force for inclusion in their final report, such as:

* employment impact (harvest workers in our case)
* availability of alternate sources (surface water may not be available)
* seasonal nature of the demand (harvest, in our case)
* historical weighting (we've got a century on most folks)

Very few will argue that Louisiana shouldn't develop a policy to guide water users to better practices, and to protect our valuable aquifers, but such policy should be well thought out and carefully implemented. The League will continue to be involved and report developments as they progress.

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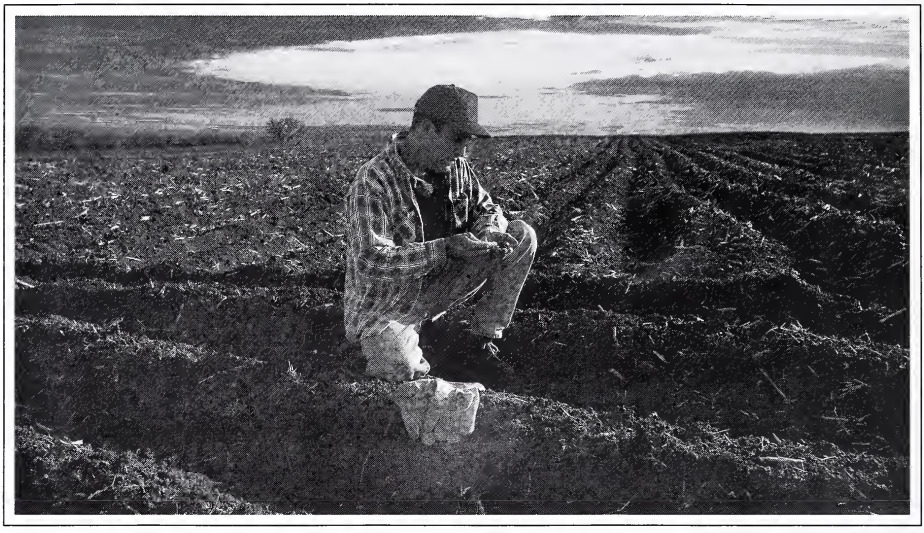

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Possible Reasons for the Shortfall in the 2001-2002 Louisiana Sugarcane Crop

Benjamin L. Legendre
Sugarcane Specialist
LSU AgCenter Research & Extension

During the past several weeks, it has become apparent in talking with many sugarcane growers and processors that the 2001-2002 Louisiana sugarcane crop will not meet expectations. I would like to offer the following reasons for this apparent shortfall, especially in cane tonnage:

1. **Over Estimation of Crop Prior to Harvest.** Many growers over estimated their crop prior to harvest. Population and height were generally good and most growers felt that the appearance was similar to or better than the previous crop resulting in a higher pre-crop estimate. However, as the harvest started, there was the realization that stalk population did not meet expectations and stalk diameter, stalk weight and stalk density were lower.

2. **Reduction in Stubble Crop Yields from Early Cutting Pressure.** Research has shown that early cutting pressure can lead to a reduction in stubble crop yields. Although LCP 85-384 is an excellent stubbling variety, we are now placing more pressure on this variety. In recent years, with the increase in planted acreage of sugarcane, harvest has begun much earlier than in the past. Many growers have noted this year that fields of older varieties, especially CP 70-321 and LCP 82-89, have done better this year than in the past. One possible reason for this is that those fields were cut later in the crop last year.

3. **Age of the Crop.** In recent years with the success of LCP 85-384, especially in the stubble crops and now grown on over 80% of the planted acreage, many growers are keeping older stubble. In fact, over 25% of the 2001-2002 crop is in third and older stubble. Although LCP 85-384 is known for its excellent stubbling behavior with crop yields exceeding 35 tons in older stubble, that is not generally the case for the current crop year. Further, it is known that any stress factors, i.e., diseases, adverse weather conditions, etc., will generally impact the older stubble crops to a greater extent than either the plant-cane or younger stubble crops.

4. **Possible Abuse of Polado as a Chemical Ripener.** Firstly, research has shown that repeated use of Polado on LCP 85-384 at the 8 oz rate can reduce the cane yield in the older stubble crops (See "Sugarcane Production Handbook - 2001", Section V, Sugarcane Ripener Recommendations). This may be true as well at the 6 or 7 oz rate. LCP 85-384 is classified as sensitive to repeated applications of Polado. Secondly, many growers are now exceeding the recommended treatment-harvest interval of 49 days. It is stated in the recommendations that research has shown that suppression of regrowth in the subsequent stubble crops may occur if treated fields are harvested beyond 49 days of treatment. Thirdly, research has shown that Polado will decrease the yield of cane of the crop being treated by 5 - 7%. Generally speaking, the longer the treatment-harvest interval, the greater the reduction in tonnage following Polado application. Assuming a reduction of 6% for a treatment-harvest interval of 35 - 49 days, and a potential crop of 25 tons without Polado, their would be an anticipated reduction of 1.5 tons with the use of Polado; for 30 tons, the

anticipated reduction would be 1.8 tons; and, for 35 tons, the reduction would be 2.1 tons. In all cases, the increase in sugar per ton (10 - 15%) should offset any reduction in the yield of cane per acre. However, if one surpasses the 49 day treatment-harvest interval, the expected reduction in cane tonnage could actually exceed 7% which would mean that any increase in sugar per ton would be negated by an equal or greater reduction in cane tonnage. This would mean that yield of sugar per acre would actually be lowered with the use of Polado. Fourthly, the harvest season is beginning a month earlier than the traditional norm which means that Polado must be applied to the crop in August. This would mean that the decrease in cane tonnage could actually exceed the 5 - 7% even if the cane is harvested within the 35 - 49 day treatment-harvest interval.

5. **Adverse Weather Conditions.** Firstly, for the first time in several years, weather conditions during the winter months, especially during November through January, were cold and/or wet. We know that drainage is the key to a successful stubble crop. Much of our better cane during the 2000-2001 crop was harvest in the mud which meant that we rutted up the fields. Water accumulated in the ruts and it was nearly impossible to remove this water until late in the spring. LCP 85-384 is not a variety that thrives under these adverse conditions. In fact, research has shown that the yield of LCP 85-384 can be seriously affected by standing water or even a high water table. Undoubtedly, the water remaining in many fields had an adverse impact on the yield of this year's crop. In fact, research conducted by Dr. Sonny Viator (personal communication, unpublished data) showed that water remaining in ruts through the winter reduced yields by as much as 4 tons to the acre. Secondly, research has shown that LCP 85-384 tends to respond to less nitrogen fertilizer, especially in the plant-cane and early stubble crops. With the higher prices for nitrogen fertilizer in the spring of the year, many growers followed these recommendations. Thirdly, much of the sugarcane belt received as much as 30 plus inches of rain over a four or five day period during the first week of June. The rainfall was especially heavy in the Lafourche and St. Mary parish areas. Some fields remained flooded for more than three weeks. Further, the water table remained elevated in many areas for several more weeks. Undoubtedly, some of the nitrogen fertilizer was lost in these areas. Much of the heavy land areas appear to be the most affected with regards to the lower yields. Fourthly, much of the crop, especially fields of LCP 85-384, was lodged by excessive wind and rain during the summer months and early in the harvest. In some cases, cane was lodged several times during the growing season. Research has shown that lodged cane does not grow as well as standing, erect cane. Fifthly, it has been noted that there is a heavy top infestation of sugarcane borers in many fields throughout the State. It is not known if this heavy top infestation has had an impact on overall cane and/or sugar yield; however, it is known that if borer are left unchecked, reductions in cane and sugar yield are probable. The lower yields may be attributed to a combination of water remaining in these areas during the winter months, the flood rains of June, possibly lower nitrogen availability, keeping a larger percentage of older stubble and the lodged condition of the crop. Of course, this is all following the probable use of Polado during the 2000-2001 crop followed by Polado use again during the 2001-2002 crop.

6. **Mulch or Residue Management.** Because of the wet conditions during the 2000-2001 harvest, much of the residue following combine harvest remained until late in the spring. Research data suggest that this residue can reduce the yield of cane in the subsequent stubble crop. Although much of the residue was ultimately removed, the timeliness of the removal and the wet field conditions could have contributed to the lower yields during the 2001-2002 harvest.

7. **Clean Cane Harvesting.** The fact that we have had a relatively dry harvest means that we have generally delivered cleaner cane to the mills for processing which translates into lower gross tons harvested per acre. Further, with the new premium/penalty formulas many growers have opted to raise the base cutter of their

harvester which means that in lodged cane more cane is being left in the field in order to reduce the amount of soil delivered to the mills. For the first time in many years several of the mills have stopped washing cane because of the reduced volume of soil being delivered with the cane.

In summary, these are my thoughts as to the reason(s) for the lower cane yields being experienced during the 2001-2002 harvest. There is no real evidence to suggest that LCP 85-384 is faltering and that lower yields will be the normal from this variety in the years ahead. However, we must realize that the yield of any variety can and does vary from year to year depending upon the circumstances outlined above. Fortunately, we have had mild winters for the past several years and enough rainfall in most areas to enable our industry to harvest record yields during the past three years. Even with the apparent reductions in tonnage for this harvest, the Louisiana sugarcane industry will still harvest a good crop that will rank it in the top 5 of all times. However, this is no consolation for those growers and processors that experienced the significant drop in anticipated tons for the 2001-2002 crop year.

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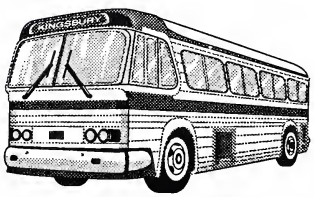

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Volume 80, No. 5 **February 2002**

THE SUGAR BULLETIN

Official Bulletin of the American Sugar Cane League of the U.S.A.

Announcing the

Seventy-Ninth Annual Meeting

of the

American Sugar Cane League

of the U.S.A., Inc.

Monday, February 18, 2002 - 10:00 a.m.
Thibodaux Civic Center
310 N. Canal Blvd., Thibodaux, Louisiana

Registration begins at 9:00 a.m.
At this meeting there will be an election of members of the Board of Directors to serve during the ensuing year.

High Yield Awards will be presented at the conclusion of the annual meeting. A luncheon will follow at 12 Noon. (More information will follow by U.S. Mail.)

The League Foundation will also hold a meeting to elect a Board of Directors.

All members of the League will please consider this an official notice to attend.

The Sugar Bulletin

The Official Organ of the American Sugarcane League of the U.S.A. Inc.

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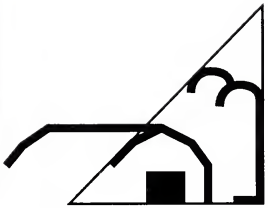

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Research - Mexico - Louisiana Harvest
Annual Meeting - Burning

The Dedicated Research Committee will have met by the end of January to review proposals from the scientist in our industry. In speaking with one or two Board members about the research effort, it was suggested that we might review where we have been spending your research dollars, and get that info to you. Consequently, I felt that it might be good to inquire, from you, as to whether the committee, and your League, is spending it in the most appropriate areas. And, more importantly, do you agree, or are there other areas of research that you feel could be addressed. While such a survey may not be available for this year's committee meeting, it will surely give the committee a sense of your concerns for the future. I am hopeful that we can conduct some form of survey in the next month or so, and the results, from growers and processors, will be provided for your information.

Mexico

As reported during the Christmas holidays to the Board and the e-mail group, Jackie Theriot and the Mexican Task Force were to meet, in Mexico, with their industry leaders. This meeting was to take place in late January. However, at the suggestion of our government, it was decided that the meeting should be postponed. Also, there is a concern in the U.S. industry, with the passage of a tax, in Mexico, on HFCS going into soft drinks, that we might create an unnecessary perception of conflict between our industry and the corn sweetener industry in this country. So, for now, Mexico is on hold.

Louisiana Harvest

Now that all mills are finished, it appears that an "approximate" production figure can be stated. This is not the final number, as that won't actually be known until all the sugar is shipped from the warehouses later this year. But, for now, it appears that Louisiana has produced in the neighborhood of 1.6 million tons of raw sugar. This number appears to eclipse last year's total production, but for some in our industry, it was not a good year. Which leaves me to repeat that the Good Lord is still, and will always be, the final say in this process. Let's hope that he provides the Congress with enough wisdom to pass, and send to the President for signing, a good Farm Bill with a viable sugar program. We have, literally, planted the seed; now, its up to them to "grow" it.

Annual Meeting

The League has now set the date for the Annual Meeting and High Yield Awards Banquet. It will be held on Monday, February 18, 2002 at the Thibodaux Civic Center, Thibodaux, LA beginning at 10:00 a.m. Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m.

A luncheon will also be held at noon. It was our hope to have a guest speaker, but as of yet no one has confirmed. ***Please remember to call the league office to RSVP for the luncheon.***

The report of the nominating committee will also be sent to you, hopefully by the first week in February. As of this date, the committee has been unable to finalize their nominations, but will do so in a few days.

You will receive more information on the Annual meeting by direct mail.

The high yield awards presentation was incorporated into our annual meeting schedule for the first time, last year. Before that, it had always been held in conjunction with the Louisiana Sugar Cane Festival & Fair. However, as the variety 384 established itself as the dominate variety in this industry, it caused many changes as to how growers and processors operated. Consequently, it affected the date on which these awards are presented. Because so many in our industry were trying to finish planting, and grinding had actually started for most by the last full weekend in September, it became obvious that the recipients were to busy taking care of business to attend. Additionally, their farming colleagues and respective plant managers were also unable to attend this function, which was established years ago to "honor" our highest yielding producers.

So, again this year, and from here on out, the presentation of the high Yield Award winners will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting (general membership meeting) of the League. I encourage everyone to attend this event.

Burning

I wish to report that the League's office shows the receipt of approximately 38 complaints about burning. Some of these were "general" in nature. I.e. . . no direct affect on anyone, just the general complaint that the party calling didn't like the smoke in the air at this time, or for that matter, anytime of the year. Additionally, the biggest complaint area appears to be the "soot" falling out, and for the most part, no one to blame directly.

I understand that some farmers actually utilized the "door hangers" that were left at the mills. If anyone has any success stories associated with the hangers, please give the League office a call or send us an e-mail or note about the event. To those farmers who utilized the hangers, to whatever extent, I commend you for your efforts. I realize that it took an extra effort on your part, but let's hope that it provided your neighbors with a feeling that you do indeed care.

I received several calls from some irate neighbors to some farmers. Some of those calls were founded in a personal dislike or disagreement between the farmer and the neighbor. And, it became readily evident that it wasn't really about smoke or ash. It was just a way for someone, who didn't like someone else, to get at them. The bad part in that situation is that it affects the entire industry, because it is still a recorded complaint. In that instance, there isn't much anyone can do. The good thing is that it appears most farmers do actually get along with their neighbors.
Thank God!

But, keep up the good work. Continue to follow the BMP's for Burning. If there is a need to train new employees or people in your operation, I would suggest that you contact your county agent so that he can let LSU Ag Extension in Baton Rouge know if there is an annual need. I would suspect that at least one session per year may be necessary. So, please let your County Agents know if you have the need. Again, to the growers, LSU Ag Extension, USDA, and everyone involved in promoting good burn techniques; Thanks!

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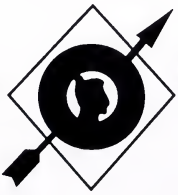
Ouachita  Fertilizer

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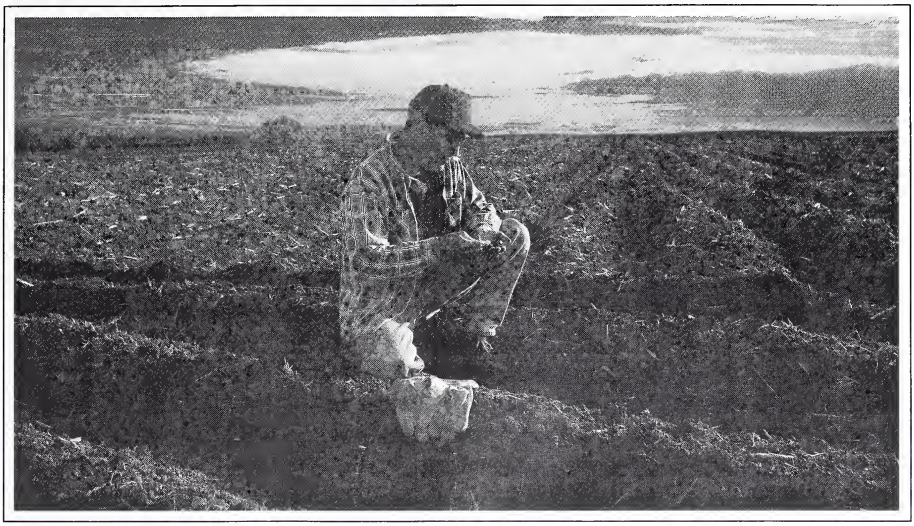

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Update - Mexican HFCS Tax - USDA WASDE December Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

In the aftermath of the partisan stalemate on the Senate farm bill in late December, the Democratic and Republican leadership has shown little indication that partisan concerns will be put aside long enough to move the farm bill when the Senate returns to work in late January. Instead, the partisan leaders have used the holiday adjournment to exchange the opening salvos in the 2002 campaign for control of Congress.

The solidification of partisan positions on big-ticket items like the economic stimulus package bodes ill for any hopes of slipping the partisan noose from around the farm bill. On the other hand, the holiday break did give Senators an opportunity to hear from their farmers back home. Also, Senate Agriculture Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) has vowed that there would be no economic stimulus package until there was a farm bill. Constituent pressure and a wish to remove agriculture as a significant campaign issue could provide the impetus for Senate action in February-March, but it would be unwise to bet the farm on it. If no compromise materializes, look for Republicans to push for another assistance package using the new money set aside for 2002 in the budget resolution.

Another factor that could affect the farm bill dynamics is upcoming Senate consideration of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation. President Bush traveled the heartland in mid-January to take the case for TPA to the farm community, including a stop in New Orleans. While Bush's remarks on agricultural policy during his trip were confined to broad policy declarations, the Administration's awareness of the linkage between TPA and agriculture could provide additional leverage for proponents of Senate passage of a farm bill. Keep in mind, House Agriculture Chairman Larry Combest (R-TX) utilized this leverage effectively to get the farm bill out of the House last fall, just ahead of the House approval of TPA.

Mexican HFCS Tax

In early January, the Mexican government initiated a 10-20% tax on soft drinks containing high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). This action exacerbated US-Mexican sweetener trade tensions at a time when the US government is weighing sanctions related to the WTO dispute panel finding that the Mexican imposition of a $175 per ton antidumping duty on US HFCS was inconsistent with the WTO antidumping agreement. The NAFTA dispute panel has yet to rule on whether the duty violates Mexico's NAFTA commitments.

USDA WASDE December Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its January World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2001/02 is decreased 100,000 short tons, raw value, from last month, due to an equal decrease in Louisiana cane sugar estimates. 2000/01 production in Louisiana is unchanged at 1,579,000 tons, while 2001/02 production fell to 1,610,000. Beet sugar production is unchanged. Sugar use is also unchanged, resulting in another reduction in the projected 2001/02 ending stocks-to-use ratio to 11.6 percent, compared to 12.5 percent last month. For 2000/01, the ending stocks-to-use ratio is increased to 21.4 percent, up 1% from last month.

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ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Freeze - Residue Removal

During the eleven-day period from December 12 to January 4, the Louisiana sugar industry received several hours of temperature at freezing or below. The Dean Lee Research Station in Rapides Parish reported about forty-one hours of freezing temperatures. The lowest temperature recorded for this area was 22.2°. Freezing hours reported for the St. Gabriel Research Station in Iberville Parish totaled forty-eight hours with a minimum temperature of 19.3°. Iberia Research Station in Iberia Parish lowest temperature was 23.5° and was at or below freezing for thirty-seven hours. The USDA-ARS Ardoyne Farm in Terrebonne Parish reported a minimum temperature of 22° and a total of thirty-five hours below freezing for the same period of time. All four minimum temperatures occurred on the morning of January 4. More detailed data for each freeze can be seen in the chart below. This data was obtained from the Louisiana AgriClimatic Information System's (LAIS) web sight (http://typhoon.bae.lsu.edu).

	Dean Lee Research Station Rapides Parish		St. Gabriel Research Station Iberville Parish		Iberia Research Station Iberia Parish		Ardoyne Farm USDA, ARS Terrebonne Parish	
Date	Min Temp[1]	Hrs. < 32[1]	Min Temp[1]	Hrs. < 32[1]	Min Temp[1]	Hrs. < 32[1]	Min Temp[2]	Hrs. < 32[2]
12 - 25 / 26	30.5	4	22.7	9				
12 - 26					29.5	6	29.3	6
12 - 26 / 27	27.5	8	26.9	5				
12 - 27			23.1	6	27.2	6	27.2	7
1 - 2 / 3	25.6	11	26.9	11	26.7	11	27.2	8
1 - 3 / 4	22.2	14	19.3	15	23.5	14	22.0	14
1 - 4	29.1	4	31.4	2				
Low Temp.	22.2		19.3		23.5		22.0	
Tot. hrs. <32	41		48		37		35	

[1] Air temperature in degrees Fahrenheit.

[2] Temperature in the middle of cane stalk at 1 meter above ground in degrees Fahrenheit.

Examinations of cane stalks on the morning of January 4 found the stalks frozen from top to bottom and that the cells inside of stalks had a watery appearance. The watery appearance of this tissue is an indication that the freezing temperatures had ruptured the cells within the stalks of cane. League agronomist Herman Waguespack, Jr. reported finding some freeze cracks in cane in Pointe Coupee Parish. According to Herman, the splits were not abundant, but there were a few.

Only four mills were processing cane after the start of the new year. There were two along the River, Alma Plantation and Cinclare Central Factory. While on the Teche, both Enterprise Factory and Iberia Sugar Co-op were still receiving cane. Enterprise was the last mill to complete the 2001 - 2002 crop. They finished over the weekend of January 12. The temperatures remained relatively cool for the last two weeks of harvest and none of the mills reported any major problems with the frozen cane.

As one travels through the cane belt and looks at fields of stubble regrowth and fields of cane which were planted this fall, there is no green to be seen. This is the most severe freeze-back of cane that has occurred in four years. This winter should be a good test of LCP 85-384's stubbling ability. For those of us who have questioned the ability of billeted seed to overwinter, this year should be a good indication of its survivability.

Residue Removal

Although many fields were burned last fall, there are still a number of fields with cane residue on them. In speaking to some growers about the lower yields of the 2001 crop, some have suggested that they think that their tonnages have been lowered in fields in which they did not remove residue. Study of residue removal in past years has indicated that a decrease in yields can be expected if cane trash is not removed.

The following was provided by Dr. Ed Richard to summarize the data that he and Dr. Rich Johnson collected during the 2001 harvest on the effect of mulch on cane.

Three chopper harvester-generated residue removal studies were conducted in the 2001 growing season by Drs. Ed Richard and Rich Johnson of the USDA-ARS Sugarcane Research Unit in Houma. Two involved the removal from first-stubble crops on heavy soil with one being conducted in Iberia Parish (Gralyn Farm) on LCP 85-384 and the second in Terrebonne Parish at the USDA Ardoyne Farm where the responses of four varieties were compared. The third study was conducted on a light soil location in St. James Parish (Welcome Farms) on a second-stubble field of LCP 85-384. Statistical differences in sugar yield were based on LSD tests at the 0.05 level of probability.

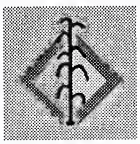
For the study conducted on Gralyn Farm, sugar yields ranged from 11,260 lbs./A to 9,910 lbs./A with the highest yield being obtained where the residue was removed by burning on January 22 and the lowest yield where the residue was allowed to remain. Residue removal by burning on February 14 and March removals were statistically similar to the no removal treatment.

The response of CP 70-321, LCP 85-384, HoCP 85-845, and HoCP 91-555 was evaluated in the first-stubble on a heavy soil. In this study no removal was compared to residue removal by burning on January 9 and March 12. As expected, varieties differed in sugar yields with first-stubble yields ranging from 3,540 (CP 70-321) to 6,580 (HoCP 91-555) lbs./A. There was a response to residue removal, but the varieties did not differ in their response to the removal of the residue. As an average of all varieties, sugar yields ranged from 5,900 to 4,790 lbs./A with the highest yield occurring where the residue was removed by burning on January 9 and the lowest yield where the residue was burned in March. Sugar yields for the no removal treatment averaged 5,310 lbs./A. This was 11% lower than the January removal and 11% higher than the March removal by burning, suggesting that late burning was injuring the cane.

The lighter soil test conducted in St. James Parish on second-stubble LCP 85-384 did not have a burn treatment. This study compared mechanical removal methods in December and

March using the Dean Gravois brush and the Orthman Residue Remover. Yields were statistically similar for the treatments. However, sugar yields of LCP 85-384 ranged from 9,440 (no removal) to 10,080 lbs./A with the highest yields occurring where the residue was mechanically removed by either the brush or the Orthman Residue Remover on March 6. This study did not include a treatment where the residue was removed by burning.

For most of the cane belt, harvest conditions during the first two thirds of the harvest were ideal and very few ruts were made in the fields harvested at that time. However, the last third of the harvest was not quite as good. Many of the last harvested fields are rutted and are holding water. Growers are reminded that these fields should be drained as soon as possible.



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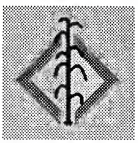

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THE BATON ROUGE LINE

By Tom Spradley
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Governor's Race

Senator John Breaux's recent announcement that he would not enter the race for Governor sounded like a starter's pistol to a posse of Gubernatorial hopefuls. Within minutes several candidates made statements of interest. The Breaux press conference room was full of Louisiana's political elite, with candidates, lobbyists, campaign workers, political writers and broadcast media in anticipation of the world-renown Senator's statement.

Democratic aspirants were the most anxious of the assembled group since it would be a daunting task to overcome the senior Senator's political power, persona, momentum and world image. Maybe equally relieved were the Republicans who also had good reason to worry about Breaux's image as "Mister Can Do"; the man who has built such a huge reputation pulling together bits and pieces of Democrat and Republican party policies to effect a suitable solution to some of America's toughest problems. To wit: the incredible job he and his staff did for the Sugar program.

Former Ways and Means Chairman Buddy Leach announced he is running while standing in the same room where Senator Breaux demurred. Leach has not served in quite a while but has not been idle. It is said that he has a strong grip on the Democratic Party. He also has tons of money from agricultural, oil and gas interests.

Lt. Governor Kathleen Blanco showed strong interest but opted to announce at a later date. She has a statewide network in place and has been raising money for some time.

State Treasurer John Kennedy also has a statewide network, which got him elected treasurer, and a considerable war chest. Kennedy is a popular Democrat who has shown the ability to get Republicans to cross over, and he is expected to announce. His confidence seems high as reports indicated that he intended to run regardless of Breaux's aims.

Attorney General Richard Ieyoub, who has admitted interest in the governorship in the past, should begin to get some pressure from attorneys--a vote he will probably have to share with Kennedy.

Congressmen David Vitter (R - Metairie) and Bill Jefferson (D - New Orleans) are also prominently mentioned. Both can raise money on the national scene as well as at home. And both have strong regional blocs of voters.

State Senator Ken Hollis (R - Jefferson Parish) has already announced and will probably put up a significant amount of personal money, a la Mike Foster, to see if his candidacy's sails can catch some wind.

Rep. Hunt Downer (R - Houma) is giving the race serious consideration. A "full-bird" colonel in the Louisiana National Guard, he can rally lots of the military folks as a base for his candidacy.

Former Senate President Randy Ewing (D - Quitman) is testing the political waters and has a strong base in north Louisiana.

State Elections Commissioner Suzie Haik Terrell (R - New Orleans) has a strong organization and an image of reformer since she supported successful legislation to abolish her own elected office.

The race is a year and a half away, and many things can change. Old names could re-appear: like Dennis Stine, Robert Adley, Phil Pries, or Quentin Daustugue. John Hainkel or John Alario's names may rise to the surface. Pat Taylor, the oilman from New Orleans who pushed to establish the TOPS scholarship program, is getting pressure. Who knows? Eighteen months is a long time.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

By James F. Coerver, P.E.
G.E.C. Inc.

Beware Of Another Environmental Smoke Screen

Dictionaries define "smoke screen" as something designed to obscure, confuse or mislead. Although the term has military origin (as in battlefield smoke), it is a metaphor for the rhetoric used by individuals and organizations to deceive or mislead others. National and local environmentalists are currently laying a huge rhetorical smoke screen in an effort to prevent the Bush Administration's EPA from correcting misguided and unjust actions of the Clinton Administration's EPA. Environmentalists are quick to criticize others about smoke generation, but shamelessly lay rhetorical smoke screens that are quite obnoxious to anyone that knows the true situation.

One of the major mischief-making initiatives of the recent Clinton-Browner EPA administration was an attempt to force aging emission sources, especially coal-fired power plants and oil refineries, to abandon or replace entire plants rather than maintain and/or improve any of its essential component parts. This was done by imposing "New Source Review" (NSR) requirements retroactively on plants that may have replaced a worn-out component part, even if the replacement part is more energy efficient and results in lower overall emissions from the entire plant. Suits were filed by EPA in an attempt to extort fines for such repair and replacement even though such actions were tacitly sanctioned and encouraged as a means of reducing air pollution by previous EPA administrations.

This Clinton-Browner assault on common sense was activated by changing EPA's interpretation of long-standing regulations, and then demanding fines and remedies for past actions which were never before questioned or considered unlawful. Note that there was no change in the Clean Air law or the promulgated regulations, no opportunity for public review of this change, and no consultation with Congress over the change in EPA policy (interpretation) which any thoughtful person could foresee as having a profound environmental, economic, and social impact.

It is important to understand that when Congress first considered and passed the Clean Air Act in 1962, it was with the clear understanding that existing industrial plants would not be forced needlessly to close. A set of ambient air quality standards was to be set, and all emission sources-not just industrial plants-can be forced to cut back on emissions to the extent necessary to achieve and maintain these standards. But, industries could not otherwise be compelled, arbitrarily, to abandon or replace old facilities. With the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) having been achieved (except for ozone) throughout most of the United States by 1978, there is no reason to force an unaffordable replacement of most of the nation's electric power supply and oil refining capacity unless the motive is much more sinister than purported. The events of and subsequent to September11, 2001, indicate that economic sabotage concerns should not be ignored.

When the Bush administration assumed power in early 2001, EPA was given a deadline to examine and report on the "New Source Review" program. Early and subsequent guidance indicates clearly the intent is merely to

simplify and clarify the regulations so that there is no real or implied prohibition of properly maintaining otherwise adequate existing facilities, and no prohibition of replacing components with more efficient, less polluting systems. The obvious motive is to help improve air quality by common sense measures rather than forcing industries that are essential for national security to shut down. On August 14, 2001, EPA announced that there would be a delay in meeting the deadline, and that a new strategy would require utilities to sharply cut emissions of sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides and mercury, but in return would reduce and simplify NSR as indicated. Such a sensible approach may be affordable and should significantly improve ambient air quality in the densily populated northeastern states where most coal-fired power plants are located.

Meanwhile, environmentalists are putting up a rhetorical smoke screen to cover an attempt to block the proposed EPA action. Environmentalists and their stooges in Congress are screaming that this is an attempt to "lower air quality standards." The accusation is a lie because there has been no proposal or discussion of changing any air quality standard (NAAQS). The proposal is merely to simplify NSR rules and eliminate the malignant NSR policy change implemented subvertly by the Clinton-Browner EPA administration. Nevertheless, there is a verbal assault going on in the news media, and the January 15, 2001 edition of *Investors Business Daily* reports that in the preceding week, Sens. James Jeffords and Patrick Leahy announced they will hold a hearing on a Bush administration plan to let businesses upgrade their plants without having to meet new-plant rules.

The Louisiana cane sugar industry has good reason to watch this matter closely and ascertain that our legislators are aware. As sugar mills enlarge and add boiler capacity, they will become "major" sources subject to "Prevention of Significant Deterioration" (PSD) rules requiring NSR compliance which, under the Clinton-Browner policy, could require replacement of boilers that do not meet New Source Performance Standards (NSPS). That could make further improvements or maintenance of such "major" sources economically unfeasible.

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THE SUGAR BULLETIN

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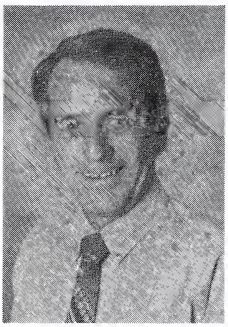

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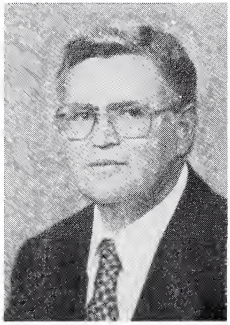

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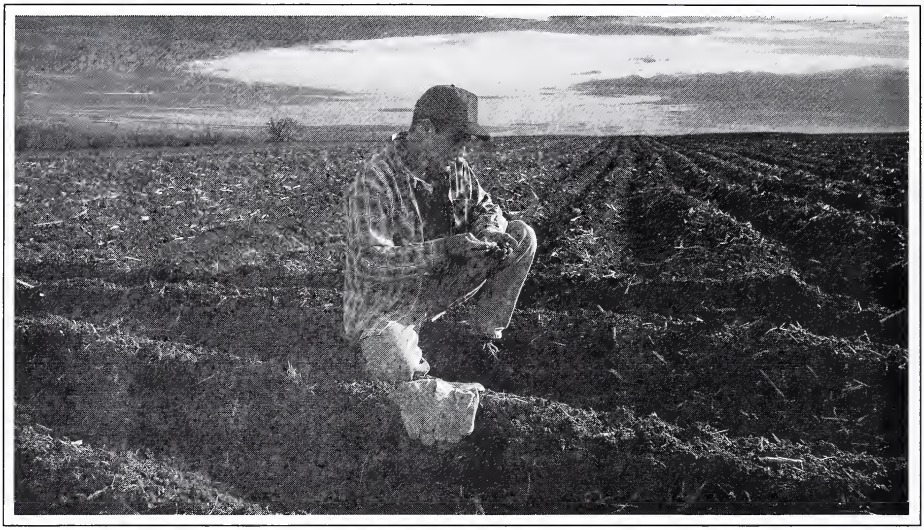

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Annual Meeting - Burning

The annual meeting and High Yield Award ceremony took place on Monday, February 18, 2002. There were approximately 350 people in attendance for the event that is held annually for the general membership to participate in their organization, while at the same time to honor those farmers that raised and harvested a significant crop. To those who took the time to come and participate, I wish to thank you for being involved in your organization. To those who didn't attend, I would again like to re-invite you to any and all League Board meetings throughout the year and especially to the annual meeting in February.

Additionally, I'd like to say thanks to Windell Jackson, Herman Waguespack, John Constant, and last, but surely not least, Nannette Nickens. Your League staff arranged, wrote reports, scheduled caterers, and handled all of the necessary chores associated with having a good annual meeting. The only item that we have to work on is trying to shorten the length of the program. But, that becomes difficult when we are trying to make sure that you, the membership, receives as much " necessary" information as possible. And believe me, there is always much going on, and your League has many success stories about which you should know.

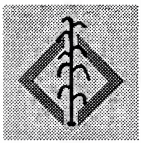
To those who came, THANK YOU! For those who did not attend, please try to come in the future. This is your organization, working for you, and the Board and staff want you to know what is happening inside and outside of your industry.

Burning

During the annual meeting John Gay reported on the activities of the Public Relations / Issue Management Committee. Specifically, he spoke about the efforts to educate and inform the public on those issues that have a direct impact or effect on them. The poll conducted last year clearly expressed that the majority of the general public wasn't against the use of fire in our field operations, but they didn't understand the need nor the fact that no one was forewarning them of events in the field before they happened. We are still receiving complaints; however, they are far less than previous years. But when we do get a specific complaint, it is usually that the smoke is blowing directly into the caller's house while they are on the phone with the League, DEQ, Department of Agriculture, or whomever it is that they are calling. The League printed "door hangers" and distributed these at the mills for use by you, the farmers; but they got very little "play" during the harvest season. Now in the spring, as farmers, you have the opportunity to better watch the weather and one usually can plan a burn. One would think it would be easier to communicate with neighbors to those fields you wish to burn. There is a whole lot less rushing around to get the crop in as in the fall. But, the League, etc. . . is beginning to get an increased amount of calls here in January and February. These burns should be a no-brainer! However, it appears that some are not adhering to the BMP's at a time when each farmer should have more time to think about his burns. Gentlemen, the rules for burning are the same in the fall as they are in the winter/spring. Please, let's continue to do the best job that we can. It is your neighbors who will have the final say as to whether you can continue to burn your fields in the future. They outnumber us substantially in just pure numbers, and if some of our farmers continue to abuse them with smoke, and /or ash, they won't be inclined to be so tolerant for much longer. Communicating with as many

people whom you might affect with your operations is just good community relations. You can be a good farmer, but if at some point you are not allowed to utilize all the tools you need to make a good crop and be efficient; THEN WHAT? The League can communicate information in a general way, but you have to do the real ground work in each and every community. And communication before hand is always better than trying to explain something after the fact.

In closing , I do want to commend the vast majority of you who are diligently trying to do a good job as farmers and communicators. Additionally, Windell, Herman or I would be more than happy to address your Rotary Club, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, etc. . . about burning or other field practices. Please invite us. But, don't think that the job is "done" just because we spoke to your group. Consider it a start of a continuing effort.



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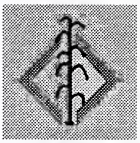

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Update
Reallocating Sugar Quota Import Shortfalls USDA WASDE February Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The Senate approved its version of the farm bill on February 13 and the House and Senate staff were expected to use the President's Day work week to begin pre-conferencing on the House and Senate bills. Overall, the differences between the two bills are rather significant, particularly with regards to payment limitations and increased spending in research and nutrition that resulted in $9 billion more in 5-year spending in the Senate package.

The payment limitations language included in the Senate bill would eliminate the 3-entity rule on receiving program benefits, i.e. whereby an individual can receive maximum payments as part of three different entities, effectively doubling the current limits. An individual would only be able to receive the maximum benefits called for under the bill, i.e. direct and counter-cyclical payments ($75,000) and marketing loan benefits ($150,000). The Senate would eliminate the ability of program crop producers to utilize commodity certificates when they hit the payment caps. An additional $50,000 would be available for married couples farming together.

While some in sugar have recommended direct government payments for sugar producers, it seems the sugar industry made a very wise decision not to move in the direction of direct payments. Since both the House and Senate passed bills restore marketing allotments and the no-cost provision for sugar, these payment limitations would not impact sugar producers. Others, such as peanut producers, who have agreed to shift from marketing allotments to programs more in line with cotton, rice, corn, wheat and soybean, would see a dramatic decrease in program benefits under the Senate language.

On the sugar provisions, the major differences between the two bills include: the one-cent forfeiture penalty removal contained in the Senate bill (but not in the House bill); a "new entrants" provision in the Senate bill expanding on the original House language; and additional Senate language regarding the disposition of unused TRQ allocations at the end of each fiscal year. The Senate bill includes new entrant language to allow new States to participate in the sugar cane allocation/allotment system, potentially allowing for new production in California and Arizona.

The Senate's New Entrant provisions would allow an allocation for a new processor of not more than 50,000 short tons in the first fiscal year of operation. In each subsequent fiscal year of operation of the new processor, the allotment would be a quantity established by the Secretary in accordance with specific criteria described in current law (marketing history, ability to market, etc). Not more than one processor allocation may be applicable to any individual sugar processing facility.

In the case of new entrant states, once a new processor has received a new allocation, the Secretary would provide the new entrant mainland State with an allotment to accommodate the allocation to the new entrant processor. The allotment to any new entrant mainland State is subtracted on a pro-rata basis from the allotments otherwise allotted to each mainland State.

Before providing an initial processor allocation or State allotment to a new entrant processor, or a new entrant State, the Secretary

shall take into consideration any adverse effects that the provision of such allocation or allotment may have on existing cane processors and producers in mainland States. Any processor allocation or State allotment made to a new entrant processor or to a new entrant State would be provided only after the applicant processor or processors in the State have demonstrated the ability to process, produce, and market (including the transfer or delivery of the raw cane sugar to a refinery for further processing or marketing) raw cane sugar for the crop year for which the allotment is applicable.

Senators John Breaux (D-LA) and Diane Feinstein (D-CA) agreed to an amendment regarding unused TRQ allocations. Currently, the Secretary reviews the TRQ late in the fiscal year and has the ability to re-allocate unused quotas to the 40 qualified countries with quotas. The new language would essentially codify the status quo. That language reads:

Reallocating Sugar Quota Import Shortfalls
"SEC. 360. REALLOCATING CERTAIN SUGAR QUOTAS.

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, on or after June 1 of each year, the United States Trade Representative, in consultation with the Secretary, shall determine the amount of the quota of cane sugar used by each qualified supplying country for that fiscal year, and may reallocate the unused quota for that fiscal year among qualified supplying countries.

"(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) QUALIFIED SUPPLYING COUNTRY.—The term 'qualified supplying country' means one of the following 40 foreign countries that is allowed to export cane sugar to the United States under an agreement or any other country with which the United States has an agreement relating to the importation of cane sugar.

The Senate conferees will be Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Pat Leahy (D-VT), Kent Conrad (D-ND), Tom Daschle (D-SD), Dick Lugar (R-IN), Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Thad Cochran (R-MS). The House conferees have not yet been named but the House is expected to name 14 conferees (8 Republicans, 6 Democrats) from the Agriculture Committee. Additional conferees potentially being named from other committees to deal with many of the Senate provisions that are outside the scope of the House Agriculture Committee.

Assuming the House names conferees based on seniority, the House conferees would be Represenatives Larry Combest (R-TX), John Boehner (R-OH), Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), Richard Pombo (R-CA), Nick Smith (R-MI), Terry Everett (R-AL), Frank Lucas (R-OK), Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), Charlie Stenholm (D-TX), Gary Condit (D-CA), Collin Peterson (D-MN), Cal Dooley (D-CA), Eva Clayton (D-NC) and Earl Hilliard (D-AL).

The goal is for the conference to begin shortly after the return of Members of Congress from the President's Day work week, i.e. February 26, with preliminary working meetings between staff to begin immediately. Hopefully, the conference can be completed and both Houses can vote on the conferenced bill by March 21, when the Members will again depart Washington, DC for the spring district work period extending through April 8.

USDA WASDE February Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its February World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2001/02 is unchanged from January at 7.925 million short tons, raw value. Imports not under the tariff rate quota are increased 45,000 tons based on the pace to date, while imports under the TRQ remain unchanged at 1,341,000. 2000/01 and 2001/02 production in Louisiana are unchanged at 1,579,000 tons and 1,610,000 tons, respectively. Beet sugar production is unchanged. Sugar use is decreased 60,000 tons, resulting in an increase in the projected 2001/02 ending stocks-to-use ratio to 12.7 percent, compared to 11.6 percent last month. For 2000/01, the ending stocks-to-use ratio is unchanged at 21.4 percent. Stocks held by the Commodity Credit Corporation are reduced 18,000 tons, mainly due to CCC sales for unrestricted use.

ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

End of Year Report

Most of the American Sugar Cane League's **research** budget goes into the variety development program. With financial support from the League, the total number of seedlings going to the field at St. Gabriel and Houma has increased. There are now on average 15 to 20% more seedlings in the green houses for the two stations. The more seedlings that go into the field the greater the possibility of finding another variety that is equal to or better than LCP 85-384.

Both of the breeding stations hired new breeders within the past year. Collins Kimbeng comes to the St. Gabriel Station with training in both classical and molecular sugarcane breeding. Collins worked in the Australian breeding program for a while. The new man hired at the Houma Station is John Veremis. John also has training in basic and molecular breeding. Although he has not previously worked on sugarcane, he is eager to take over the basic breeding program. Both of these researchers will make great additions to the **team** that is already in place.

The ICSB (International Consortium for Sugarcane Biotechnology) is a consortium that is financially supported by organizations that represent sugarcane producing countries throughout the world. The American Sugar Cane League is a member of the Consortium and has contributed to several research projects over the past years. Some of the projects have led to the development of what are called molecular tags. With these tags, a molecular researcher (Dr. Pan at the USDA in Houma) can fingerprint a variety/find a molecular marker that is present in a variety. When a cross is made, this same marker should be present in offspring. Sugarcane has a complete flower and will often make what is called self-crosses. When a breeder makes a cross with varieties for specific traits and he has fingerprints of the two varieties which are being crossed he can make sure that the selections from that cross are from both parents and will have a better chance of expressing the trait for which he was breeding.

There are many genes for positive traits such as cold tolerance, yield increases, disease resistance, stubbling ability, erectness, and etc. found in the wilder species of cane. It is a long process to bring a cane from its wilder form to the commercial varieties that we grow. The basic breeding program as we know it today was started back in the 60's. At that time, Preston Dunckelman was in Canal Point, FL making commercial crosses for the Louisiana Sugar Industry. Through a cooperative effort of the League and the USDA, crossing facilities were established at the Houma Station. In addition, Dunckelman was returned to Houma to establish the basic breeding program in Louisiana. There have been a few varieties that can trace their pedigrees back to the basic breeding program; the most notable is LCP 85-384. It is now estimated that LCP 85-384 is a parent of at least 50% of the more advanced varieties.

Tom Tew has been in charge of the basic breeding program at the Houma Station for the last couple of years and has made a great impact on the ability of the station to increase the number of crosses that are made there. With support from the League and a lot of resourcefulness on his behalf, he was able to make a record number of seeds in 2001. Tom will now turn his attentions to the commercial breeding program. At both stations, this is the first year that HoCP 91-555 has flowered in sufficient numbers and a goodly number of crosses were made with it as a parent.

At this time, there is one variety on the secondary increase stations. The variety HoCP

96-540 could possibly be released to growers in the fall of 2003. Plant-cane and first-stubble data were collected on this variety from Outfield Variety Tests during the 2001 harvest season. In these replicated tests HoCP 96-540 significantly out yielded LCP 85-384 in tons of cane per acre and in sugar per acre.

The League was able to secure a grant of $115,000 from the LDAF (Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry). The amount was split evenly between the two sugar research facilities. Each was able to acquire some badly needed equipment with this money. The League has also entered into a cost sharing agreement with the USDA to improve the drainage at the Ardoyne Farm. About 30,000 to 40,000 seedlings were lost to the flooding of the fields caused by tropical storm Allison.

Work will be done to the levees so that the water will not top them as easily. An additional pump will be added to supplement the pump that is already there. When seedlings are transplanted to the field, they must be watered. Also, the new pump can be used for irrigation. This will increase the acreage that can be used to plant seedlings.

Most of the data collected indicates that the residue from green-harvested cane should be removed either mechanically or by burning before the end of January. Removal in February or in March by burning can reduce yields significantly.

If we lose the privilege of burning our crop, a large amount of material will be left in the fields. Research is being conducted into what effect cane residue has on the quality of the subsequent crops and what effect it may have on soil fertility and water quality. There are two new researchers working on this project. For LSU, Charles Kennedy is now conducting cultural practice research which includes mulch management and fertilization practice. The new man at the USDA is Richard Johnson. Rich is following up on the cultural practice research that Ed Richard was conducting. He is also expanding the culture practice work into methods and tools that help lessen the impact of the residue behind green harvested cane. Due to the importance of this problem and the effect that it could have on the Louisiana Sugar Industry, the League was able to get more Federal money allocated to the Houma Station for research on green-harvested cane.

The usefulness of precision agriculture in sugarcane production is now being examined by researchers at LSU and the USDA. In these tests, fields are surveyed with a GPS and are divided into $1^{1/2}$ acre grids. Soil samples are taken in each of these grids. Yield data will be compared to the soil fertility data. It is expected that there could be significant savings in the cost of applications of lime and fertilizer. In some of the initial studies, the lime requirement for a field was cut in half. The initial studies have also shown that the yields within a field are not nearly as consistent as we would think. Sonny Viator at the Iberia Station has found preliminary indications that early lodging can significantly reduce the yield potential of LCP 85-384.

Most of this article is associated to work done in the breeding program. There are just as many dedicated and hard working researchers working on the economics, production, and the processing of sugarcane. The Louisiana Sugarcane Industry thanks **all** of you for your enthusiasm.

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MILLING AROUND

By Dr. Peter Rein
Audubon Sugar Institute
Louisiana State University AgCenter

Cane Preparation

The degree of cane preparation is one of the most important parameters affecting extraction in a sugar mill. It is a well established fact that a finer preparation leads to a higher extraction of sugar from cane. Since extraction in Louisiana is low by world standards, it is worth considering how preparation can be improved to assist in improving the recovery of sugar. Potential for significant gain is large.

A further benefit of good preparation is the fact that good preparation leads to lower bagasse moisture. A mill that improves its preparation finds that bagasse moisture drops in the absence of any other changes to the extraction plant.

Type of Preparation Required

The objective of cane preparation is to reduce the sticks of cane to small particles, which enables the juice to be easily extracted and yet preserves the characteristics required for feeding to a mill, or the characteristics for an open non-compact bed if diffusion is practiced. Pulverizing cane into "sawdust" does not achieve these objectives. The optimum preparation leads to a condition where most of the sugar-containing cells are ruptured, yet long strands of fiber are kept intact. This type of preparation facilitates the removal of juice, whether by milling or diffusion.

Well-shredded cane has a higher bulk density than knifed cane, thus assisting feeding of the mill. In addition, the long fibers lead to a felting tendency in the prepared cane whereby the particles become matted together with a certain amount of tensile strength. This is highly advantageous in terms of mill feeding. As the prepared cane enters a mill, the interaction between fibers pulls the mat of cane into the mill. It is widely accepted therefore, that the degree of preparation affects feeding of a mill and hence the capacity of the mill. Thus attainment of the optimum preparation also has an advantage in terms of capacity of the mill.

What is the optimum degree of preparation? This is normally assessed by measuring the Preparation Index (PI). This involves tumbling a sample of the prepared cane in a known quantity of water, and measuring how much sugar is extracted in a given time. Whether milling or diffusion is employed, sugar mills in Australia and South Africa aim for a PI of over 90. This results in a type of material in which individual fibers up to about 4" long are evident without any "chunks" of cane.

Contrast this with what happens in Louisiana, where PI values of around 70 to 80 are obtained on average. There is no reason why the optimum preparation in Louisiana should be different to the optimum in other sugar producing countries.

Methods of Cane Preparation

There are essentially two ways of preparing cane, which may be used alone or in combination, namely knifing and shredding.

Where knifing only is employed, there are usually two sets of rotating knives. Both turn at about 600 rpm, giving tip speeds of 200 ft/sec. The first will cut about 6" off an apron carrier or anvil roll, and the second with a clearance of about 2". Generally they are fixed hammers

unless there are large numbers of rocks or other extraneous material which will otherwise smash the knives.

Knifing on its own cannot generally lead to a PI of over 90. The action of the knives is to cut the cane into small pieces, which does not generally rupture the cells. However, the old Empangeni mill in South Africa did achieve a high PI with two sets of knives, with the second set rotating in a reverse direction, and with a grid plate or washboard above the second knives.

It has sometimes been found that blunt knives give a better preparation than sharp knives as more cells are ruptured. However, getting high throughputs with blunt knives is difficult.

Shredders act in a somewhat different way. Swing hammers rotate on a rotor at 1000 to 1200 rpm, with tip speeds of about 330 ft/sec. The hammers are set to have a close clearance between the hammer tips and a washboard of anvil grid bars at right angles to the rotation of the hammers. High speed photography undertaken at Queensland University shows the impact of the hammer smashes pieces of cane while "falling" freely in the shredder. The close clearances are important in achieving a fine preparation of the type required, i.e. long strands of shredded fibers. According to Rod Murry in Australia, the main action of the grid bars seems to be to return the particles into the path of the hammer so that further "strikes" can occur.

Heavy duty shredders have been developed to achieve PI values over 90. They generally have massive hammers, each weighing 30 to 40 lbs, arranged to give full coverage by the hammers across the width of the shredder. Washboards are adjustable to give the close clearances required.

Where whole-stalk cane is processed, it is usual to have one or two knife sets ahead of a shredder. However, when billeted cane is being processed, there is no need for any knifing at all. All 30 mills in Australia feed billeted cane directly into a shredder, as the only means of preparation.

Since the optimum type of preparation is more easily achieved in a shredder than by knifing, there is a general trend to more shredding and less knifing. A single heavy duty shredder on billeted cane achieves the requirements and leads to a simplified preparation stage. It also enables rubber belts to be used as cane conveyers rather than expensive and maintenance intensive apron carriers.

Maintenance and Operation

Hard metal "Domite" inserts on knives and shredder hammers are suitable in the Louisiana industry, where extraneous material like rocks is absent. The hard materials are brittle and are generally unsatisfactory where rocks are abundant

Hard inserts on shredder hammers can be indexed and turned to provide a sharp edge without having to change hammers. Where hammers are changed, weighing of hammers is required, with hammers of equal weight installed opposite each other to keep the rotor in balance.

Power required for shredding is no more than that required for knifing. Typical installed power figures for knifing (2 sets) and for heavy duty shredding are about 50 kW/per ton of fiber handled per hour.

It has been found that the degree of knifing ahead of a shredder has little or no influence on the preparation of cane leaving a heavy duty shredder. What does have a significant influence is the speed of the shredder and the clearances between hammer tips and washboard anvil bars. It is important in operation that these clearances are kept at required close tolerances.

Evidence from Lafourche Mill

Before the 2001 grinding season, the Lafourche mill installed a Silver Fiberizer, which was previously in operation in Texas. This is similar to a heavy duty shredder, and it is of interest to look at the effect of the installation of this shredder on their extraction plant results. At the same time, the feeder roll on number 1 mill was changed, a Donnelly chute installed on number 1 mill; these affect feeding of the first mill more than extraction. In addition, chokeless pumps were installed, doing away with a common cush-cush system; this would have some influence on extraction. Season average results are:

Season	Crushing Rate (tons/hr)	Fiber % Cane	Extraction (%)	Imbibition % fiber	Pol % Bagasse	Moisture % Bagasse
2000	364	14.4	91.3	232	3.2	50.3
2001	431	13.7	94.5	165	2.2	51.8

The mill did not have sufficient power (only 26 kW / ton fiber/hr) to adjust the shredder clearances to the optimum close settings; distance between hammer and washboard was about 1 ¼". Even so, the PI increased from below 68 in 2000 to 87 in 2001. Extraction was so good that imbibition was reduced from 400 to 330 gpm, even though crushing rate was increased 18.4%. The bulk of the extraction improvement is believed to be due to the installation of the shredder. At 20 ¢ lb of raw sugar, the extra recovery is worth almost $1 million in extra revenue.

Conclusions

Evidence from Lafourche and other mills has consistently shown that the use of heavy duty shredding leads to a good financial payback. Power used in shredding is no more than that used in knifing.

It seems logical at mills handling only billeted cane to follow the route of the Australians, i.e. a cane belt feeding billeted cane directly to a heavy-duty shredder. The consequence should be a simplified, lower cost cane handling and preparation system, leading to the type of preparation that gives a high extraction, low bagasse moisture and improved mill capacity.

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ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

By James F. Coerver, P.E.
G.E.C., Inc.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The end of a processing season is a good time to reflect on the many environmental concerns of the Louisiana Sugar Cane industry, and to estimate the impact of environmental regulations on future operations. After all, the direct and indirect costs of compliance with environmental laws, including the costs of controlling or avoiding danger and nuisances to employees and neighbors, have a major impact on the "bottom line" of farmers and millers. These costs include, but are not limited to capital investment, salaries, fuel, facilities maintenance and repair, and of course the ever growing fees (taxes) charged for issuing and keeping environmental permits. Neglect of these costly activities, such as controlling smoke in the fields or excessive emissions from sugar mill boilers, or even failing to keep records required by regulators, can result in stiff fines and/or penalties such as legal restraints and damage suits. Environmental regulations are indeed a "pain in the neck", but ignoring them can result in "decapitation". One thing that might help the situation is standard cost accounting systems for both mills and farms so that economies can be identified and costs kept under better control.

On the regulatory front, the major item last year was revised boiler rules under Sections 111 and 112 of the Clean Air Act as amended in 1990. The USEPA had last indicated that draft rules were to be published in early 2001. The League had major expenditures in calendar years 1998, 1999, and 2000 for boiler testing and technical support to assist in the endeavor, but the announced rule promulgation has not occurred, and it now appears that the boiler rules are now in a "holding pattern" along with a number of other rules while the Bush Administration tries to untangle an environmental rule-making mess created as a parting shot of the Clinton Administration. President Bush sent a Valentine's Day 2002 message proposing a major overhaul of the nation's air pollution laws, and the boiler rules are probably caught up in this initiative. The major thrust of the President's new initiative is stricter controls on emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides and mercury, which are really not a problem for bagasse boiler operation, and thus the expected boiler rules, and any changes associated with the new initiative, should not adversely affect the sugar cane industry.

One other component of the President's new initiative is dealing, on a mostly voluntary basis, with global warming (i.e. greenhouse gas emissions). Again, this is no problem for the Louisiana sugar cane industry, and may eventually present an opportunity to cash in on Federal grants or other incentives to promote the use of bio-fuels, conserve energy by co-generation, and possibly to "bank" and/or sell carbon dioxide emission reduction credits via increasing the production of sugar cane and using more bagasse and field trash as boiler fuel for electric power generation (in lieu of burning

fossil fuels, that is).

The recent attempt by the Clinton Administration's EPA to enforce New Source Review (NSR) rules on all emission sources such as power boilers is also involved in the new Bush Administration initiative. Hopefully the capability to maintain and repair old facilities and/or the replacement of existing components with components that are more fuel efficient, and/or have lower overall emissions, will be restored promptly.

On the downside, the costly and unnecessarily strict National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for PM_{10} has survived court challenges. The standard is now firmly in place as demanded by environmentalists. The standard is difficult to attain, and probably impossible to attain in many situations. If the standard is strictly enforced, it could prohibit all outdoor burning such as that for crop and forest production. However, PM_{10} is so difficult and costly to measure adequately in the ambient air that the standard cannot presently be enforced. With the Federal budget again in jeopardy of deficit, it seems unlikely there will soon be funds to fully implement the PM_{10} Standard.

It is the existing laws and rules applicable to smoke nuisance that apply to the cane field burning situation. The smoke management system in effect during the 2001 season was largely successful in reducing both nuisance and complaints. Unfortunately, even a 99 percent grade is not good enough to completely satisfy environmentalists. However, with 100 percent compliance there would be a formidable defense for individual farmers and the industry as a whole in the event of challenges by regulatory authorities or individuals. The ultimate solution for the field smoke problem is to find a way to beneficially use all parts of the cane plant rather than burning cane plant components in the field.

On January 20, 2002, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) promulgated new rules imposing more strict rules on the emission of nitrogen oxides (No_x) from boilers and gas turbines in the Greater Baton Rouge Area, including facilities in Iberville, Pointe Coupee and West Baton Rouge parishes. These rules are intended to reduce ozone formation in the ambient air during the period May 1 through September 30. The League provided information to LDEQ establishing that bio-fuels such as bagasse have comparatively low No_x emissions per BTU of fuel input, and that sugar mills seldom, if ever, operate more than 20 days during the target ozone control season. Accordingly the new No_x rule exempts all sources at sugar mills and also exempts emission sources using bio-fuel (bagasse) for over 50 percent of the fuel stoked. Thus, there is no "No_x Rule" impediment to using bagasse as fuel at any time during the calendar year.

Another continuing concern for both farmers and millers is the total maximum daily load (TMDL) program for water pollution control. The incoming Bush Administration put a hold on this program pending a review of its many objectionable provisions and enormous cost of implementation. After study, EPA now admits that the program will require up to 10 years to do the necessary field and laboratory work to support the concept, and many megabucks annually to fund the program. Impending Federal budget deficits make it unlikely the program will be fully funded anytime soon. The program ought to be killed, but that may not happen. What will most likely happen is the program will proceed underfunded and load allocations to farmers and industry will be made on the basis of inadequate scientific data, arbitrary stream standards that are unattainable, and according to an allocation model that has not been tested and proven correct. Farmers and industry should be prepared to challenge, by every legal means, any attempt to impose unreasonable constraints on the operation of farms and mills by TMDL allocations.

Hopefully, there will be better news to report next year.

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A Report on the 2000 Outfield Variety Tests

Daniel P. Guillot LAES, Research Associate
Donnie Garrison USDA-ARS, SRRC, Agronomist
Windell R. Jackson ASCL, Agronomist
Herman L. Waguespack, Jr. ASCL., Agronomist

This report has been written to inform the Louisiana sugarcane industry of the agronomic performance of varieties harvested in the outfield variety tests during 2000. Outfield variety tests are conducted during the final three years of the 12-year multistage Louisiana sugarcane variety improvement program.

These tests are planted, harvested and evaluated cooperatively by the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station of the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, and the American Sugar Cane League.

In 2000, 29 outfield tests (Table 1) were mechanically harvested at nine locations throughout the sugarcane belt. These tests were on sugarcane farms with typical soils for that region. The soil type, region, planting date and harvest date for each outfield test location are presented in Table 1.

Yield data for 27 of the 29 tests were obtained using the combine harvester and a weigh-wagon equipped with electronic load cells. Yield data for two of the tests were obtained using two-row whole-stalk harvesters and a tractor mounted hydraulic weigh-rig. Additional information on the procedure used for data collection and preparation is given at the end of this report (1,2,3).

Varietal yield data are reported by crop for heavy soils and light soils in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. Data for sugar per acre, tons of cane per acre, sugar per ton of cane, stalk weight and stalk population are reported here; however only sugar per acre will be discussed in the text. It should be noted that although the results are presented by soil types, statistical analysis of past data suggest that relative yields are not affected by soil type. Because LCP 85-384 has been the leading variety in Louisiana since 1998 (71% of the sugarcane acreage in 2000), it is used as the standard for comparison and is highlighted in Tables 2 and 3. A new statistical method has been adopted for data analysis. To adjust for missing data, the analysis used SAS 8.01 Proc Mixed. Mean separation used least square means probability differences with P=0.05.

The most advanced experimental variety in the outfield, L 95-462, was harvested in plant cane and first-stubble tests in 2000. In 2000, this variety was not significantly different from LCP 85-384 in heavy or light soils. Based on current data and observations, L 95-462 is classified as resistant to smut and mosaic, moderately resistant to leaf scald and the sugarcane borer, and susceptible to rust. L 95-462 is comparable to LCP 85-384 in yields and past data suggest that it stubbles well. Harvestability of L 95-462 is comparable to CP 70-321 as it tends to lodge but is more easily harvested than LCP 85-384.

Other experimental varieties in the outfield are HoCP 96-509 and HoCP 96-540, both in plant cane in 2000. In heavy soils, neither variety was significantly different from LCP 85-384 in 2000. In light soils, HoCP 96-540 yielded significantly higher than LCP 85-384, whereas HoCP 96-509 was not significantly different from LCP 85-384. During the 2000 harvest, these two varieties were moderately

erect and harvested well.

Of the commercial varieties, none were significantly higher yielding than LCP 85-384. Also there were no significant differences in plant cane and first-stubble in heavy soils, as well as plant cane and second stubble in light soils. Most of the commercial varieties tested were significantly lower yielding than LCP 85-384 in one or more crops for heavy and light soils in 2000. Details are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation to the growers who participate in the many different stages of the variety development program.

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Table 1

Dates of planting, dates of harvest, soil types and regions for nine outfield locations during 2000.

Location	Crop Year							
	Plant cane		First stubble		Second stubble		Third stubble	
	Harvested 2000	Planted 1999	Harvested 2000	Planted 1998	Harvested 2000	Planted 1997	Harvested 2000	Planted 1996
Light Soil								
Bon Secour [1]	12/13	09/13	**	09/25	10/20	09/15	**	**
Georgia [2]	12/22	08/24	12/22	10/21	11/02	09/25	11/02	10/24
Glenwood [2]	12/01	08/26	11/03	09/22	10/25	09/09	10/25	09/18
Lanaux [1]	12/09	09/15	12/08	10/06	10/26	09/18	10/26	10/01
St.John [3]	12/05	08/18	10/30*	09/29	10/30*	09/05	**	**
R.Hebert [3]	11/29	08/25	11/29	09/24	10/18	09/16	**	09/20
Northside West [4]	12/21	08/27	12/20	09/01	**	**	**	**
Heavy Soil								
Allain [3]	12/27	09/14	10/30	10/01	10/31	09/12	**	**
Magnolia [2]	10/24	08/23	10/23	10/02	**	09/23	10/23	10/16

Bon Secour 4th stubble test harvested on 10/20/00 and planted on 9/20/95.

* These test were harvested by whole stalk (2-row) harvesters.

** No test harvested at this location.

[1] Mississippi River Area
[2] Bayou Lafourche Area
[3] Bayou Teche Area
[4] West Louisiana Area

Table 2

Combined analysis of outfield tests on heavy soil locations during 2000

Variety	Sugar/A	Tons/A	Sugar/T	St. Wt.	Population
		Plantcane crop at two locations			
CP70-321	5504	21.7	244	2.20	19446 -
LCP85-384	**7395**	**29.8**	**248**	**1.93**	**30963**
HoCP85-845	5917	24.2	242	2.39	20135 -
HoCP91-555	7612	31.7	239	2.14	30094
L95-462	7304	29.8	246	2.63	23291 -
HoCP96-509	6140	24.7	246	2.52	20001 -
HoCP96-540	7762	30.0	255	2.52	25433
		First-stubble crop at two locations			
CP70-321	6141	23.3	266	2.29	20705
LCP85-384	**7808**	**28.9**	**272**	**1.95**	**30270**
HoCP85-845	7065	26.7	261	2.09	25987
HoCP91-555	7691	27.2	281	1.74	31672
L95-462	7447	29.9	265	1.97	29581
		Second-stubble crop at one location			
CP70-321	4794 -	22.0 -	218	1.90	23185 -
LCP85-384	**6560**	**28.3**	**232**	**1.58**	**35916**
HoCP85-845	4702 -	21.5 -	217	1.63	26610 -
HoCP91-555	5221 -	21.9 -	239	1.42	31671
		Third-stubble crop at one location			
CP70-321	4823 -	18.8 -	254 -	2.18 +	17136 -
CP72-370	5182 -	20.3 -	255	1.81	22503 -
CP79-318	6206	23.7	262	2.02 +	23859
LCP82-89	5803	21.7	267	1.72	25374
LHo83-153	3637 -	14.9 -	243 -	1.31 -	22862 -
LCP85-384	**6557**	**23.8**	**276**	**1.63**	**29308**
HoCP85-845	6100	25.6	238 -	2.03 +	25432
HoCP91-555	5018 -	18.8 -	267	1.53	24759

(+) or (-) denotes yields which are statistically higher or lower than LCP 85-384.

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Table 3

Combined analysis of outfield tests on light soil locations during 2000

Variety	Sugar/A	Tons/A	Sugar/T	St. Wt.	Population
Plantcane Crop at seven locations					
CP70-321	7637	29.7	259 -	2.59 +	22414 -
LCP85-384	**7737**	**28.1**	**276**	**1.93**	**29002**
HoCP85-845	7007	29.8	236 -	2.50 +	23443 -
HoCP91-555	7947	30.5	261 -	2.07	28978
L95-462	7612	30.1	252 -	2.46 +	24164 -
HoCP96-509	7596	30.5	250 -	2.59 +	22844 -
HoCP96-540	9394 +	36.0 +	264 -	2.55 +	27645
First-stubble crop at six locations					
CP70-321	7744	29.9	263	2.41 +	24562 -
LCP85-384	**8368**	**31.7**	**266**	**1.81**	**34673**
HoCP85-845	7296 -	28.9	253	2.11 +	27216 -
HoCP91-555	7129 -	26.8 -	267	1.78	30529 -
L95-462	8010	31.5	254	2.28 +	27246 -
Second-stubble crop at six locations					
CP70-321	7373	29.1	253	2.35 +	24872 -
LCP85-384	**7909**	**31.0**	**257**	**1.69**	**37952**
HoCP85-845	7244	30.1	239	2.06 +	29251 -
HoCP91-555	7683	29.0	266	1.71	34208
Third-stubble crop at three locations					
CP70-321	7400	28.7	258	2.48 +	23368 -
CP72-370	6891 -	27.4 -	252	2.30 +	23848 -
CP79-318	7472	32.1	235	2.39 +	26939 -
LCP82-89	7422	29.8	250	2.03 +	29745 -
LHo83-153	6397 -	27.0 -	239	1.93 +	28256 -
LCP85-384	**8154**	**32.2**	**254**	**1.71**	**38520**
HoCP85-845	9162	36.6 +	251	2.26 +	32496 -
HoCP91-555	8936	32.6	274	1.83	36480
Fourth-stubble crop at one location					
CP65-357	6128 -	26.9	227	1.91 +	28090 -
CP70-321	4712 -	19.6 -	240	2.23 +	17594 -
CP72-370	4126 -	18.0 -	230	1.70 +	21187 -
LCP82-089	6073 -	25.8 -	235	1.93 +	26839 -
LHo83-153	5000 -	21.7 -	229	1.41 -	31244 -
LCP85-384	**7643**	**31.6**	**241**	**1.57**	**40200**
HoCP85-845	7488	33.3	224	1.97 +	33890 -

(+) or (-) denotes yields which are statistically higher or lower than LCP 85-384.

2002 High Yield Winners
(2000 Crop)

Top 20 Producers

Rank	Grower	Parish	Acres	S/A
1.	Blanchard Farms, Inc.	Assumption	649.2	9,484
2.	Martin & Poche, Inc.	St. James	702.8	9,209
3.	St. Rose Farms, Inc.	St. James	177.7	9,001
4.	SJM Farms, Inc.	Assumption	354.1	8,723
5.	Hebert Bros. Farm	Lafourche	1,419.2	8,612
6.	Engemann Farms	Pointe Coupee	878.0	8,509
7.	Landry Farms	Assumption	1,047.3	8,363
8.	Graugnard Planting, Inc.	St. James	1,197.7	8,311
9.	Lester & Bobby Gravois	Lafourche	1,532.1	8,298
10.	Naquin Bros., Inc.	Lafourche	1,345.1	8,292
11.	Allee & Allen	St. James	2,831.4	8,128
12.	Denis Knobloch	Lafourche	175.8	8,107
13.	Thibodeaux Bros., Inc.	Lafourche	975.6	8,106
14.	Trinity Farms	Assumption	1,004.7	8,034
15.	Mark D. Patout	St. Mary	896.9	8,009
16.	Woods Farms, Inc.	Assumption	1,772.5	8,000
17.	Al-Ro Farms, Inc.	Lafourche	164.2	7,998
18.	Randall G. Rivere	Iberville	632.1	7,997
19.	Carmouche Planting Co., Inc.	Assumption	882.5	7,954
20.	Blackberry Farms	St. James	1,471.3	7,948

The American Sugar Cane League wishes to congratulate all 2002 High Yield Winners on your production for the 2000 Crop.

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Category	Acres	1st Place Winner	2nd Place Winner
I	100-299.9	Ricky, William &John Broussard	Clement, Clement & Broussard
II	300-699.9	Kevin Breaux Farm	Laviolette Farms
III	700-1,499.9	Mark D. Patout	Fabian Lemaire, Inc.
IV	1,500+	Freyou Farms, Inc.	Northside Planting Co., LLC

RIVER/ BAYOU LAFOURCHE DISTRICT

Category	Acres	1st Place Winner	2nd Place Winner
I	100-299.9	St. Rose Farms, Inc.	Dennis Knobloch, Jr.
II	300-699.9	Blanchard Farms, Inc.	SJM Farms, Inc.
III	700-1,499.9	Martin & Poche, Inc.	Hebert Bros. Farm
IV	1,500+	Lester & Bobby Gravois	Allee & Allen

NORTHERN DISTRICT

Category	Acres	1st Place Winner	2nd Place Winner
I	100-299.9	Fuselier Farms	Donald Zaunbrecher
II	300-699.9	Keith Morris	No Winner
III	700-1,499.9	Engemann Farms	Robert Morris
IV	1,500+	Charles Landry & Sons, Inc.	Alma Plantation

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Assumption	Blanchard Farms, Inc.
Iberia	Mark D. Patout
Iberville	Randall G. Rivere
Lafourche	Hebert Bros. Farm
St. Charles	Big D Farms
St. James	Martin & Poche, Inc.
St. John	Riverland Farms
St. Martin	Laviolette Farms
St. Mary	Kevin Breaux Farm
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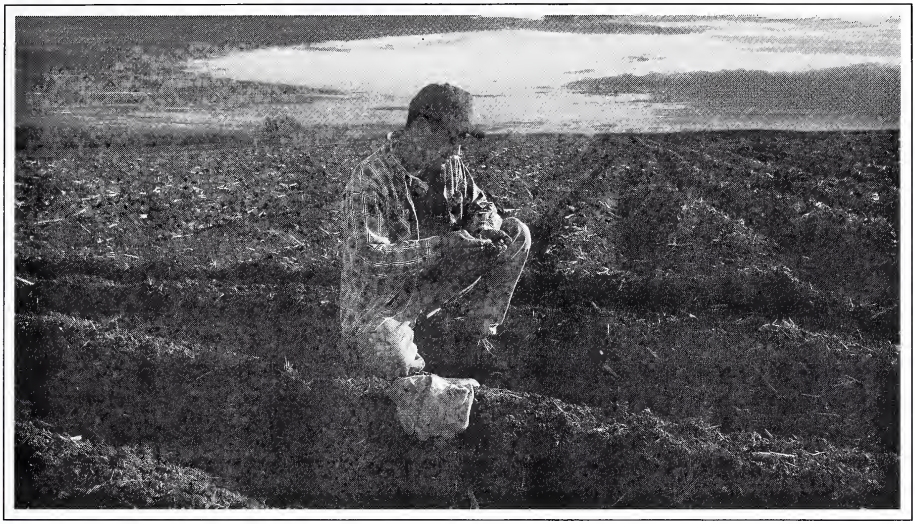

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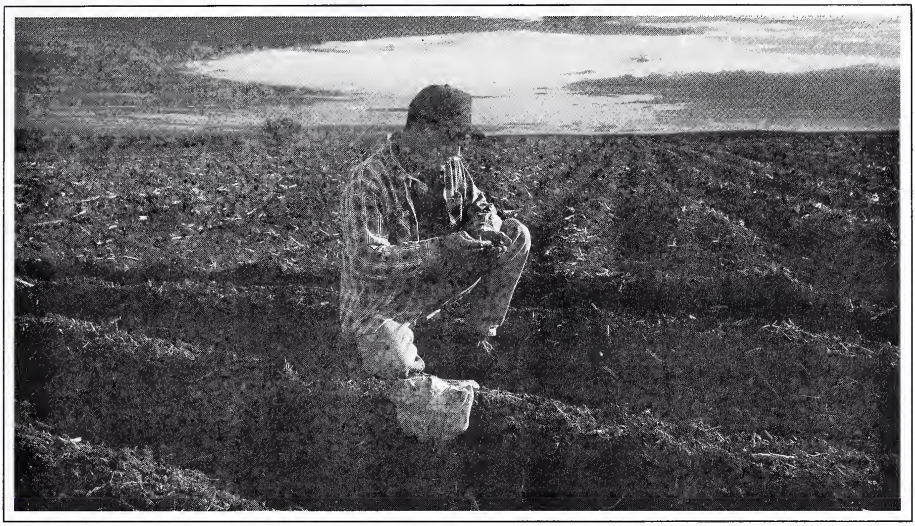

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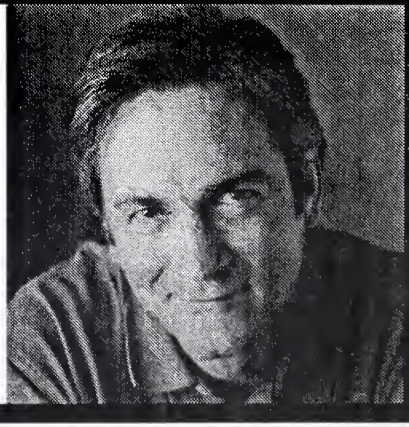

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Weight Limits - Smoke / Burning

The State Legislative Committee, Chaired by Board Member Kenneth Peltier, met at the League office on March 18 to begin discussions of options for the industry's efforts to maintain at least the same limits for hauling cane that we have at present. The committee, after two hours of discussion involving the State Police Weight Division staff, realized that there is much information that needs to be evaluated, discussed, circulated and hammered out before any legislative proposals might be put forth to the Louisiana House and Senate or to Congress later this year or early next. One thing became eminently clear while visiting with the state police; the fact that we will need to address our permitting situation, and address it positively, or Louisiana might jeopardize its share of Federal Highway dollars in the future if we don't.

During this past harvest season, **less than five percent (5%)** of the trucks hauling to the Louisiana sugar mills were overloaded. And, most of those overloads were at just a few mills in the belt. As a matter of fact, most by the same growers who hauled cane to more than one mill. The vast majority of growers and haulers responded to the effort by the industry to police itself. State police have openly stated that the Louisiana sugar industry is a model for what can be done to police its own, and it is recognized by state officials, and appreciated. State Police made themselves available to work with growers who were having problems with keeping the loads at 100,000 lbs. GVW and less. They actually went to growers' loading site(s), when invited, to help growers who may have been having a problem with keeping their loads legal. They are here to help us and to work with us.

Then there are some, thankfully a small group, who feel that they should be allowed to haul any amount of cane that they would wish. Those that would do that are jeopardizing the entire industry's effort to keep the weight permits for the long term. But of this disregard for the entire industry's concern, the League's State Legislative Committee will recommend to the full Board of the League at the March 27 League meeting, endorsement and support of the "scale lockout" effort for this upcoming year's harvest. Additionally, the committee will ask the League to advise all local, state and federal officials of the industry's need to be able to utilize the present permitting system while working toward a resolve for all parties involved; growers, processors, local elected officials, state elected officials, and members of the U.S. Congress. The League urges all people involved in this industry to continue the good work of maintaining your loads at or below the100,000lbs. GVW. It's there to help everyone find some efficiency in their transportation of cane.

Smoke / Burning

I am aware that I have already written an article about burning in the past few months, but I read a report this week by Norman Rozeff of Texas. Charles Thibaut and I happened to be visiting with John Dunckelman and Jim Shine on a recent trip to Washington. In that meeting, we got into the discussion of air quality and data on how much oxygen the sugar cane plant produces, opposed to the amount of carbon dioxide it absorbs during its growing periods. I had never seen Mr. Rozeff's report, which has a few years

(age wise) on it, but is still quite relative. Even though all cane sectors of the industry are producing more cane per acre, the information provided in the report is also still relevant. The relevant fact is that sugar cane is a beneficial producer of oxygen, absorbing more carbon dioxide than the vast majority of plants on this planet, while producing vast amounts of oxygen. Additionally, Windell and Herman have talked with Tom Tew of Houma USDA about some additional air quality data and material. The only concern that I have with "cane" scientist workin out the formulas etc. . . to make thi determination is that many environmentalists wil want to debunk it because it came from "friends of the industry. If I don't know anything else, do know that these two men are good scientist and whatever data that they come up with can b verified by others. Maybe, just maybe, someon other than ourselves will be impressed with wha our cane crop provides to our environment on th positive side.

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Update - USDA WASDE March Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The conference on the farm bill could be completed shortly after increased staff activity and a round of meetings of conferees in mid-March, but all signs point to mid-April at the earliest for final approval of the legislation. At the time of this writing, the significant differences in House and Senate commodity, conservation and nutrition titles remained unresolved. Since these are the main points of contention in terms of policy and funding, resolving these differences will be key to completion of the conference.

Another significant hurdle for conferees was discovered in late February, when the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) alerted the Senate Agriculture Committee that the initial budget score for the Senate bill was made using erroneous information. The new CBO score increased the cost of the commodity portion of the Senate bill by $6.1 billion, putting the bill over the $73.5 billion budget mark by an equal amount. The latest indications are that the conferees are looking at spending approximately $46 billion on the commodity title, versus $48 billion in the House bill and $45 billion in the Senate bill when the $6.1 billion scoring error is included.

House conferees received a letter from 25 Members of Congress urging them to accept the Senate provision eliminating the loan forfeiture penalty on sugar. Please voice your appreciation to the entire Louisiana delegation for showing leadership on this issue. One major obstacle to approval of this key policy objective is the $169 million cost that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has placed on this change. Representative Terry Everett (R-AL), chairman of the House agriculture subcommittee with jurisdiction over the sugar program, has asked CBO to update their scoring model to reflect USDA's projection that the sugar program will raise revenue in 2002 and 2003 by selling forfeited sugar back into the market. In 2002, USDA now projects $295 million in revenue from the sale of forfeited stocks.

The Senate language regarding reallocation of sugar tariff rate quotas (TRQ), a compromise reached on the Senate floor by Senators John Breaux (D-LA) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), may face opposition from the Bush Administration and the House Ways and Means Committee, who will have special conferees at the conference table to discuss this provision. The Administration is purportedly opposing the measure because it would be in conflict with WTO commitments, while the Ways and Means leadership raised this issue and a broader jurisdictional issue in requesting a place at the conference table. On the latter, the US Constitution stipulates that all revenue measures must originate in the House and the TRQ reallocation could result in increased revenues – hence their jurisdictional red flag. It is possible that concerted opposition from the Administration and the House Ways and Means Committee could result in removal of the TRQ language from the final bill.

While the sugar industry is not directly affected by the Senate payment limitations provision, this issue is one of the major policy differences that conferees are currently negotiating and the outcome of those talks will have a major impact on the support for the conferenced farm legislation among Southern

Members of Congress. While most analysts predict that most of the limiting language will be removed in conference, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) has warned that some real limits must remain in place in order to ensure passage of the compromise when it goes to the Senate floor.

USDA WASDE March Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its March World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2001/02 is increased 45,000 short tons from February to 8.674 million short tons, raw value, due mainly to higher-than-expected sugar recovery from sugarbeets. Imports under TRQ and other remain unchanged at 1,341,000 and 335,000, respectively. 2001/02 cane sugar production in Louisiana is decreased 35,000 tons to 1,575,000 short tons, based on lower-than-expected January output. Sugar use is decreased 70,000, resulting in an increase in the projected 2001/02 ending stocks-to-use ratio to 13.9 percent, compared to 12.7 percent last month. For 2000/01, the ending stocks-to-use ratio is unchanged at 21.4 percent. Stocks held by the Commodity Credit Corporation are reduced 30,000 tons, mainly due to CCC sales for unrestricted use.

"Consultant of the Year" Calvin Viator. Ph.D. and Associates, L.L.C.

Calvin Viator of Thibodaux, LA has been named one of three "Consultants of the Year" by the National Association of Crop Consultants (NAICC) and BASF Agricultural Chemical Company. The Award was presented at the annual meeting of NAICC in Albuquerque, New Mexico held on January 23-27, 2002.

The "Consultant of the Year" award recognizes superior entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, innovation and community involvement by an agricultural consultant.

Dr. Viator who holds a Ph.D. degree in plant pathology from Louisiana State University has been a sugarcane consultant in Louisiana for 42 years. His business (Calvin Viator, Ph.D. and Associates, L.L.C.) serves 225 clients in the 24 parishes in which cane is produced in Louisiana. Also named "Consultant of the Year" by NAICC/BASF are Risk Gilbertson of Minnesota and Glenn Rorin of Massachusetts.

Viator is a member of the American Farm Bureau, The American Soybean Association, the American Society of Sugarcane Technologists, the National Association of Crop Consultants, the American Phytopathlogical Association and the Louisiana Agriculture Consultants Association (LACA). In LACA in which he is a charter member he has served as charter president and also secretary/treasurer.

Crop Decisions magazine has listed Viator's consulting firm as one of the top ten consultant firms in the nation. This listing is based on number of clients, amount of acreage and number of years of experience in agricultural consulting.

Dr. Viator credits his eight employees with much of his success. They are: Paul Templet, MS; J.C. Patrick, MS; Blaine Viator, Ph.D.; Lance Rodriguez, MS; Craig DeGravelle, MS; Ed Ostheimer, MS; Ben LeBlanc, BS and Jeremy Naquin, BS.

Dr. Viator has retired from Nicholls State University after 30 years of service as professor of biology.

Congratulations to Calvin and his employees.

ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

How Much Damage Did The Freeze Do?

At the writing of this article on March 15, the number one question from growers is how much damage did the freezes at the end of February and beginning of March do to the cane crop?

It is much too early to say conclusively what the extent of the damage will be. So much depends on the type of weather that we get during the rest of the spring. If the weather turns warm and sunny, it will be much better for the crop than if it remains cool and damp. The two League agronomists have had a chance to make a quick survey of a few cane fields. Herman Waguespack reports that he finds some regrowth of cane in most of the fields that he had a chance to look at. When he was looking at these fields, he noted that in many of the early harvested fields much of the regrowth couldn't be seen unless one gets out of the vehicle and actually walks into the field. Fields of plant cane and later harvested stubble fields seem to be rebounding from the freeze much faster than the older stubble and earlier harvested fields. The author had a chance to tour the Bunkie area on March 15. The fields appeared to be no worse than the fields in the more southern region of the cane belt that had been observed the day before. At least one field planted with billet seed was observed. The stand of cane in this field appeared to be coming back quite nicely. Again, it is much too early to decide what effect this cold weather has had on fields that were planted with billet seed when compared to fields that were planted with whole stalk seed. Before the freezes, most fields were greening quite nicely. The stands in many of the older stubble fields, which were to be plowed out, were starting to look very attractive. We were on our way to another great crop. How much yield potential was lost due to freeze is anybody's guess. Certainly any time early growth, is lost there is a corresponding decrease in yield potential. All indications suggest that only minimum damage occurred from the late February and early March freezes. The League's agronomists will continue to check fields planted with both billet seed and whole stalk seed for stand problems. Growers are also reminded not to be in a hurry to plow out fields that are slow to come back. Unless a field has been scheduled for plowing, there should be no rush to do so.

Some field work was accomplished during the first part of February. This early work was stopped by the cold weather and rain. Most fields are fairly well drained and relatively free of weeds. Even so, the application of spring herbicides have been somewhat delayed due to frequent rains at the end of February and the first of March. Within the last week or so field conditions have started to improve, but the high winds have prevented the application\ of herbicides. After the severe burn back caused by the winter, growers are urged not to use any herbicide program that will delay the growth of cane. Cane is already under enough stress. Because of the small food reserves of the seed pieces, especially that of billet planted cane, any herbicide program that includes a herbicide that will burn back cane should be avoided. Growers should check with their local Extension Agent for more information on herbicide recommendations.

By mid March for three of the five previous years, the crop was much more advanced and the stands in many fields needed to do little suckering. For these reasons, much of the cane belt had started applying dry fertilizer by mid March, and some growers were nearly completed. In 2002, many growers are just now able to chop their headlands let alone to do any other field work. However, in a few areas of the cane belt, a

fair amount of field cultivation has been done, and the application of dry fertilizer is well under way. However, due to the wet weather and lack of development of the cane, most growers have been in no rush to start fertilizing. Research data indicates the highest yields from the application of nitrogen fertilizer are achieved when it is applied during May. This data also indicates that the month of May is second best. Many years of data indicate that yields are not quite as good when fertilizer is applied during this month.

As the state's yield data for the 2001 harvest season is reviewed, it was not that bad a crop. The 17 Louisiana Sugar Mills ground 14,976,997 gross tons of cane. The opening date of the first mill was September 17, 2001; the last mill to complete harvest finished on January 11, 2002. At the start of harvest growers reported to the mills that there were 16.9 million tons of cane to be processed during the 2001 harvest season. However, by November 5 this estimation had dropped to about 15.8 million tons of cane. The final total was about 15 million gross tons of cane processed. Table 1,indicates that the 2001 crop was the third best crop for gross tons of cane processed during the years from 1997 to 2001, while the total of 1,579,537 tons of sugar (raw value) was the second highest of the five crops.

The yield data and processing information from the mills are very firm numbers. However when calculating the yield data for field production, the numbers are not so definite. For previous crop yield calculations, it was estimated that 7% of the total acreage was used for seed. However, for the 2001 crop because of short cane, early planning and the amount of acres planted with billet seed, it is estimated that 8% of the total acreage of the 2001 crop was used as seed. The USDA reported about 491,000 acres of cane for seed and harvest. If 8 percent of this acreage was used for seed then that leaves about 452,000 acres for sugar production. The data presented in Table 2 indicates that for the five years of 1997-2001 only in 1999 did the state average higher sugar per acre. As was stated earlier, even though there were some areas of the state with very poor crops, as a whole the 2001 crop was not all that bad for the state.

Chart 1 contains the yields in tons of cane from 1977 – 2001. The data in this chart points out that for a ten-year period (1990 - 1999) there was a steady increase in the state's yields. Other than great growing seasons, what is the cause of this surprising number of consecutive years of increasing yields? There are two main reasons for these increases. In 1993, about 1% of the crop was harvested by combines. LCP 85-384 was released to the Louisiana Sugar Industry in the same year. By 1997 LCP 85-384 occupied about 29% of the state's acreage and about 25% of the crop was harvested with combine harvesters. For the 2001 crop, a little less than 80% of the entire crop was in one variety (LCP 85-384). Combines harvested a little more than 80% of the 2001 crop. It was the increasing use of both the combine and the new variety that set what will possibly be a record for back-to-back years of increasing yields. This is an indication of the importance of the Louisiana Sugar Cane Breeding Program and the need to try unproven equipment when it becomes available. To break this record, **all** the breeding program has to do is find a new variety that has higher yields than LCP 85-384.

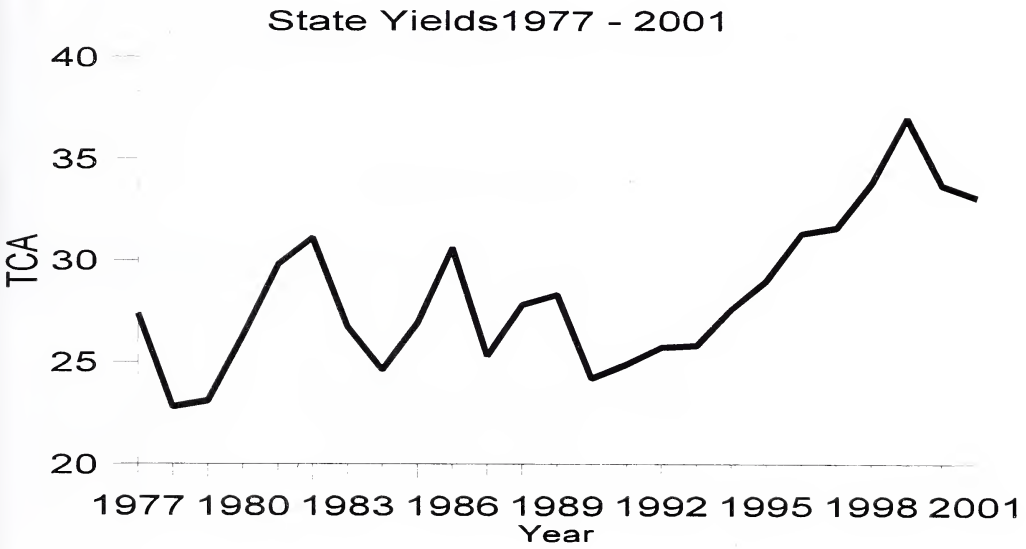
Table 1. State Production for 1997 - 2001.

Crop Year	Total Planted	Harvested For Sugar	Gross Cane Ground	Sugar, Raw Value
	Acres	Acres	Tons	Short Tons
1997	410,000	380,000	12,019,441	1,275,000
1998	425,000	395,000	13,358,869	1,263,400
1999	463,000	432,000	15,982,000	1,675,000
2000	496,000	460,000	15,497,457	1,565,848
2001	491,109	451,820	14,976,997	1,579,537

Table 2. Per Acre State Yields for 1997 - 2001

Crop Year	Per Gross Ton	Gross Cane Per Acre	Sugar Per Acre
	Pounds	Tons	Pounds
1997	212	31.6	6710
1998	189	33.8	6397
1999	211	37.0	7800
2000	202	33.7	6800
2001	207	33.1	6872

Chart 1



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By Dr. Peter Rein
Audubon Sugar Institute
Louisiana State University AgCenter

Education and Training in Sugar Process Engineering

The Audubon Sugar School has a long history in education and training. The first sugar engineering course was established when the sugar school started in New Orleans in 1891. In 1925 it was moved to the Baton Rouge campus of Louisiana State University (LSU) and the Audubon sugar factory was built. The school was an integral part of the chemical engineering department, but in 1977 it became a department on its own and the name changed to the Audubon Sugar Institute (ASI).

In the days when the Audubon Sugar School was integrated within the chemical engineering department, LSU was the best place in the world to get training in sugar engineering. LSU had an excellent reputation, and there are still a number of senior people in the worldwide sugar industry who benefited from this education.

A degree in sugar engineering continued to be offered, but in the 1980s it became clear that the students preferred a degree in chemical engineering as a more broadly applicable qualification. The last course related to raw sugar technology was chemical engineering practice laboratory, using the equipment in the Audubon factory, and continued to be offered up until about 1985. Formal courses covering sugar processing have recently started again, with 11 students registered for BE4342 Sugar Process Engineering.

Some short courses aimed at practical skills training within the Louisiana industry have been offered through the years. The short courses remain an important part of our efforts to train and keep up to date the people in our industry.

Why is education and training so important?

It is widely recognized that the pace of change in business and technology is much greater than ever before. The global market has increased competition, which is evident from the cost pressures on the sugar industries around the world. In Louisiana and elsewhere, it is likely that these will intensify. Previously a company's competitive advantage came from a combination of money, technology, raw materials and people. Money and technology now flow around the world with ease – the real competitive advantage is the people in the organization. Lester Thurow of MIT in *Head to Head* says this:

> The skills of the workforce are going to be the key competitive weapon in the twenty-first century. Brain power will create new technologies, but skilled labor will be the arms and legs that allow one to employ the new product and process technologies that are being generated. Skilled people become the only sustainable competitive advantage.

It is imperative that the sugar industry gives attention to the technical education and development of its manpower to create a viable sugar industry in the future. Of all the tasks before us, developing people is the most critical. There is no other way to long term productivity, profitability or survival.

The Louisiana industry has allowed its training and education efforts to lapse. When training efforts are stopped, no penalty is evident immediately. Training or the lack of it has a long time lag associated with it. Neglect of training

effort takes years to show and correspondingly it takes years to build up a suitable supply of outstanding skills needed in an efficient industry.

Why LSU?

A large number of milling companies in Louisiana report that the absence of suitable education and training for their employees is a serious problem. As a result there is insufficient depth in sugar expertise in the mills. There is almost unanimous support for the idea that ASI should be the provider of suitable education and training for the sugar industry.

The university provides a good infrastructure for teaching, and the geographical location and the pedigree of Audubon make the re-introduction of formal training a logical action. In addition, the existing pilot plant facilities can be used to enrich the formal course work.

The re-instatement of courses at ASI is considered to be beneficial for the research effort, because teaching always complements and stimulates research. Teaching gets us closer to our target markets, so that we become more useful to our clients. In addition, it is anticipated that this will make more good quality graduate students available for research projects. In fact a Special Review of ASI undertaken in 1990 by a select international review panel recommended the re-introduction of formal courses in sugar engineering.

It is likely that support from the Louisiana industry only, will not be sufficient to sustain a viable course. However it is considered that it will be strongly supported by other sugar producing areas, which will require advertising internationally to ensure the critical mass necessary to keep the program going. It is not unrealistic to expect that the re-vitalization of ASI, partly as a result of useful undergraduate and post-graduate courses, could promote the Audubon and LSUs reputations internationally.

Options for formal training in sugar technology

It is believed that LSU will be the only English-speaking university in the world to provide formal and university-accredited education in sugar processing. Universities in Berlin, Prague, Cuba and elsewhere provide similar training, some of which is oriented to the beet sugar industry.

Other sugar research institutes such as those in Mauritius and South Africa provide training in sugar technology through the running of extensive 12-week and 10-week courses, respectively. It is interesting to note that the South African industry moved away from offering a formal qualification in sugar technology in 1983 to offering specialized training for graduates who already had a formal qualification in one of the recognized branches of engineering.

In some quarters a view was expressed that a shorter period of training, e.g. a two-year "associate degree" strongly sugar oriented, would result in suitably qualified people less marketable and more closely tied to sugar. However the resistance to industry-specific training has already been mentioned, and LSU does not make provision for this option.

Some sugar companies around the world have formalized training programs for young engineers entering the sugar industry. This gives them hands-on experience and introduces them into the techniques of organizational management, but the most comprehensive programs also always require the formal learning of sugar engineering principles through formal course work. The aim of the Audubon Sugar Institute initiative is to provide the best formal training available.

Audubon Short Courses

The total training and education effort needs to take account of all technical employees in a sugar mill. This includes skills-based training for operators, training for non-technologists and in-depth training for engineers. Some of these are catered for through short courses run at ASI. These may be categorized as:

- Overview courses
- Operator skills courses
- Specialized courses on specific topics

ASI has offered a number of short courses over the years, and continues to do so. Use is made of ASI pilot plant facilities to supplement these courses. Efforts are under way to identify the particular areas where these courses should

be directed. Information on the new series of courses for 2002 has been mailed out, and details are displayed on the ASI web site (www.lsuagcenter.com/audubon).

Of particular interest is a new course on Boiler Design and Operation given by Norman Magasiner, a world authority on bagasse fired boilers. This type of course should help engineers and managers identify the options open to them to improve the performance of their boilers.

All these courses qualify as continuing education courses for registered professional engineers. Professional Engineers require 30 hours PDH (Professional Development Hours) over a two-year period.

Outline of Graduate/Undergraduate Courses

The ideal graduate engineer for the sugar industry has a strong grounding in the basic science and engineering disciplines, with a specialization in sugar processing as part of an engineering degree. This can provide everything that the sugar company wants, and overcomes the aversion of students to an industry-oriented degree that leaves them less marketable. It is possible to do this through introducing a "minor" in sugar engineering.

Sugar Engineering Courses

ASI is not an academic department, therefore new courses have been introduced through the department of biological and agricultural engineering. The two sugar engineering courses offered in the College of Engineering are a course in sugar process engineering, which teaches all the background to sugar processing, and sugar factory design, which goes into the greater depth and detail required in equipment design in a factory.

Pre-requisites for these courses, apart from the basic sciences, are credits in thermodynamics, fluid mechanics, heat transfer and basic electrical engineering.

Minor in Sugar Engineering

The objective of this program is to produce a graduate ideally suited to the operation and management of a sugar-producing facility. In all cases, the student would be encouraged to work as a part-time student at ASI. He would be given maximum exposure to sugar processing at every opportunity.

A set of courses has been prescribed so that students studying in biological, chemical or mechanical engineering may be able to earn a minor in sugar engineering by choosing the two sugar courses described above and their electives to meet the requirements. If possible the student should also choose a design project in a sugar engineering related topic, which would be overseen by the staff of the Audubon Sugar Institute.

Another option involves spending the fall semester at an operating sugar mill, using this period as an internship, yielding 3 credit hours. This could substitute for one of the courses prescribed for the minor, but would probably require a slightly longer time in which to complete the degree.

Masters in chemical, mechanical or biological engineering specializing in sugar engineering.

Students will be recruited to take a masters degree in chemical, mechanical or biological engineering. This is targeted at people who have a first degree and wish to gain some specific sugar processing expertise through further study.

Following the thesis option, the Masters academic requirement is 24 credit hours in the nominally 21-month program. The course requirements include the sugar process engineering and sugar factory design courses. Depending on the first degree of the individual concerned, he would be encouraged to choose electives appropriate to providing a strong sugar expertise.

A thesis will be required, and this should be related to a relevant sugar-processing topic. In all cases, the student would be encouraged to take on a research assistantship in ASI for the duration of his course.

Options for presenting the sugar engineering courses as condensed, intersession or continuing education courses.

As an alternative or in addition to the normal course arrangement, consideration will be given to condensing the sugar engineering courses into full-time intensive courses held over a three-week period during the summer semester. This

course could be opened to outsiders for non-degree purposes, through a Continuing Education program. We still need to gauge what kind of support this might have in Louisiana.

Financial assistance available

The ASSCT have agreed to introduce sugar manufacturing scholarships to match those they award in agriculture. It is proposed that they be awarded to students following a minor in sugar engineering. Preference will be given to the children of families active in the Louisiana industry, because this means they are more likely to make their career in sugar. Some of the mills and refineries have indicated a desire to fund scholarships for students. It is hoped that there will be widespread support for this approach, so that there will at all times be a developing pool of people being properly trained for the sugar mills.

It is hoped to build up Audubon's research effort by taking on more graduate students. Graduate assistantships are available to high caliber students. It is hoped that sugar companies will sponsor students in this way to qualify promising engineers for a career in their companies, with the research program giving them the option to research a particular topic of interest to the company. The research can be kept confidential if necessary, within the limits of Louisiana law. The student returning to the company concerned would be well versed in sugar technology and an expert in the research area of interest.

Conclusions

These courses need the support of the U.S. sugar industry. Consultation with the industry suggests that the support exists, but active involvement in these programs is necessary. The industry can participate in the following ways:

- Sponsor engineering students to follow the minor in sugar engineering
- Provide scholarships to students doing the sugar processing courses
- Provide graduate assistantships for graduate students to work in ASI and get an MS in engineering
- Support the ASI short courses and suggest what courses you would like ASI to run

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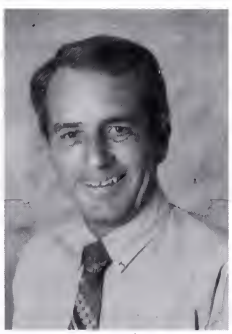

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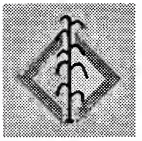
The Louisiana industry is wary of training and employing graduates, because the other industries around the area offer higher salaries, and bright young graduates get lured away. In practice it may be necessary for the Louisiana sugar industry to accept that if they pay well-educated and well-trained people more money, the net benefit to them in terms of improved profitability is still considerable.

There is a time lag associated with education and training – the benefits take some time to show and the time to intensify efforts is now. I hope that the industry, sugar companies and individuals will leave a legacy of an effective and well-trained work force. This is perhaps one of the best and cheapest investments that the industry stakeholders can make.

There are perceived to be major benefits to this education and training initiative, to the companies who employ the graduates, to the graduates pursuing a career in the sugar industry, and to ASI in terms of its research output.



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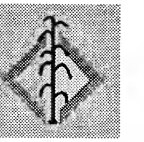

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THE BATON ROUGE LINE

By Tom Spradley
Spradley and Spradley

Governor Calls Special Session
Ground Water Commission Expected to Act
League's State Legislative Committee Discusses Weight Limits

Governor Foster's call for a special session of the legislature contains a record number of items,196, but most of them are local issues. Only a handful focus on the Governors agenda of re-tooling Louisiana's economic development program.

Most of the Governor's items fit into the package of new economic incentives which has been touted by the administration for the last six months. The new items sought for job creation include tax credits for research and development, tax credits for commercializing Louisiana university and college based patents, tax credits for creating high paying jobs with health benefits, tax credits for filming movies, t.v. programs and commercials in the state. Also included is money for adding to the new basketball arena in New Orleans and building a new indoor practice facility for the Saints.

In the new economic development approach, emphasis will be placed on assisting firms in the areas of software research and development and in biotechnical research and development. A major part of the inducement package, a $25 million "closing fund", designed to allow the state to make quick infrastructure improvements to assist relocating industries will wait to be considered during the fiscal session to be held following this special session.

Assorted other topics such as home land security, school prayer, lowering the entry age for public schools to four year olds, and speeding up state road projects.

Ground Water Commission Expected to Act

The Louisiana Ground Water Advisory Task Force is expecting a petition by representatives in north/central regions of the state to act to protect the Sparta aquifer. Sparta is a huge underground aquifer lying under southeast Arkansas as well as north and central Louisiana. The aquifer seems to be the most stressed aquifer with demand coming from rice farmers in Arkansas, and agricultural interests and paper mills in the upper part of Louisiana.

If the request is made, the Task Force will ask the Ground Water Commission to place meters on wells to determine exact amounts of water usage, and by whom, with an eye toward curtailing excess demand on the supply.

No such aquifer stress is being experienced in sugar growing areas and no action is expected in the foreseeable future.

League's State Legislative Committee Discusses Weight Limits

The State Legislative Committee, chaired by Kenneth Peltier, met recently to discuss the overweight hauling problem the League has been grappling with over the last few years. Since the weight limit was increased to 100,000 lbs., a few years ago, complaints have increased and the Department of Transportation and the State Police have asked that we strictly adhere to the limit. Violators are few, but they threaten the new limit. The Committee is looking at ways to self-enforce the limit and to also help in reducing the wear and tear on the roads.

ARE DISEASES A THREAT TO 384?

By Jeff Hoy
Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology Department
LSU AgCenter

Many growers with more than 80% of their acreage in one variety, LCP 85-384, are nervous. They wonder whether some unknown factor, such as a new disease, might suddenly appear and devastate the variety that the industry has become so dependent upon. One hears the "all our eggs in one basket" analogy used frequently. With so much acreage in one variety, the occurrence of a new problem could result in extensive damage and yield loss. This article will discuss the nature and extent of risk involved with diseases when one variety becomes dominant within an industry.

What are the chances of a new disease appearing that could greatly reduce the yield of 384? In recent times, our industry has a history of new diseases appearing. We have had to deal with four new diseases in the last 25 years, rust, smut, leaf scald, and yellow leaf, so it is not surprising that growers might be anxious about the appearance of yet another new disease. So, are there any more out there? The answer is yes, but none are in our neighborhood. No major disease of sugarcane that we do not already have currently exists in regions surrounding Louisiana. We have seen most of our previous new diseases coming, as their occurrence was documented in South and Central America, the Caribbean islands, and Florida before showing up here. The potentially important remaining diseases do not occur in this hemisphere.

Diseases spread through the air in some cases or through the movement of infected plant material. In many places, growers traveling to other countries see things they like and bring home "suitcase varieties" to try out on their farm. Since we cannot grow varieties from other parts of the world with long growing seasons, this is not a problem for us. In fact, we seldom bring in commercial varieties from other countries even for breeding. This spring, a new set of regulations will take effect that were formulated to control the importation of sugarcane and prevent the movement of diseases. All of this means the likelihood of getting a new major disease is not great. In fact, the greatest threat to 384 could be from one of the diseases we already have.

Breeding and selecting new varieties with resistance to diseases is a major emphasis of the cooperative sugarcane variety development program. LCP 85-384 was not only a success story with increased yields; it also was resistant to most of our diseases when it was released. When a disease resistant variety is planted on most of the acreage in an area, it puts the microorganisms that infect cane under pressure to change and overcome the resistance that is preventing them from reproducing. Pathogens exist as populations composed of individuals with diverse genetic make-up. Disease resistance in a variety may be overcome in either of two ways. First, an individual that has the capability of overcoming the resistance in the variety may already exist in the population. When the resistant variety is planted widely, reproduction of that pathogen type is highly favored, and it increases very rapidly. The other possibility is that a new pathogen genetic type arises by mutation. Once this occurs, there is a vast area of susceptible plant tissue available for infection, and the pathogen and disease that it causes can spread very rapidly. In either case, the result is that the variety is no longer resistant.

This has already occurred in 384 with one

disease, rust. It was rated as resistant to rust when it was released, but clearly this is no longer the case. Fortunately, our climate helps to keep rust in check, and we are hopeful that it will not reduce the yield of 384 greatly. But, are there more diseases that can change and cause a major problem? The one that has changed in the past and caused the loss of varieties is one people don't think much about any more: mosaic. This virus disease occurred throughout the industry when CP 65-357 was widely cultivated. No one paid it too much attention since 357 showed little yield loss when infected. However, it has caused major problems and the loss of varieties in the past. What are the chances it could happen again? Can mosaic or one of our other diseases change as easily as rust?

Rust diseases are important on many crops. One of the reasons they are important is that they are capable of quickly changing to overcome crop resistance. Each leaf lesion produces many spores that can cause new lesions. Think then about the number of lesions there are on one leaf then how many leaves there are on one plant, in one field, or over an entire industry. Each lesion can represent one rust generation, so there can be countless generations occurring each season. This means the chance of a low probability event, such as a mutation that leads to a new genetic type, is increased, and any new genetic type that possesses an advantage over the others can quickly increase in the population. If it can infect and reproduce on a resistant variety, it will have a tremendous reproductive advantage, and the population can explode if conditions for disease development are favorable. This is what we saw during Spring, 2000.

The other pathogens that cause important diseases here, such as mosaic, leaf scald and smut, have life and disease cycles that are not nearly as favorable for the occurrence and increase of new genetic types. As a result, the breakdown of resistance to these diseases is uncommon to rare. Around the world, the relative frequency for documented cases in which resistance was overcome would be greatest for mosaic and least for smut.

Our newest disease, yellow leaf, does infect LCP 85-384. We are still uncertain how much of a threat it poses to 384. The symptoms of this disease (yellow mid-ribs on younger leaves high up on the plant) were first recognized in mature cane in countries where cane is in the field much longer than it is here. We have seen symptoms in a few years when warm conditions have persisted late into the season. The question has been whether it can affect the growth of cane before symptoms are seen. Mike Grisham with the USDA Sugarcane Research Unit has conducted yield loss experiments with LCP 82-89 and LHo 83-153 and documented yield losses. We have an experiment in progress now with 384, and in the plant cane year, no significant yield loss due to yellow leaf was detected. We are hopeful that this new disease does not represent a serious threat to 384. Just to be cautious, the LSU AgCenter Sugarcane Disease Detection Lab now monitors Kleentek® seedcane for yellow leaf virus, and when a problem is found, the company does not sell seedcane from that field. Not enough is known yet about this disease to know whether strains occur that affect varieties differently.

Growing one variety on 80% or more of our acreage has risk associated with it. The occurrence of a new disease or change in an existing one that will cause a major problem cannot be ruled out. But, in my judgement, the odds favor us being able to grow 384 without serious disease problems for enough time to allow the breeding program to come up with new varieties with similar yield potential.

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Parish Winner - Assumption

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Martin & Poche, Inc.

Top 20 Producer - 2nd Place

1st Place District Acreage Winner - River/Bayou Lafourche District Category III

Parish Winner - St. James

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Hebert Bros. Farm

Top 20 Producer - 5th Place

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Parish Winner - Lafourche

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Landry Farms

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Lester & Bobby Gravois

Top 20 Producer - 9th Place

1st Place District Acreage Winner - River/Bayou Lafourche District Category IV

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Top 20 Producer - 10th Place

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Denis Knobloch

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Thibodeaux Bros., Inc.

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13th Place

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Trinity Farms

Top 20 Producer -
14th Place

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Mark D. Patout

Top 20 Producer -
15th Place

1st Place District
Acreage Winner -
Teche District
Category III

Parish Winner -
Iberia

Windell Jackson, League Agronomist; Christopher Patout; Queen Sugar Adrienne Hulin; and Mark Patout

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Clement, Clement & Broussard

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Kevin Breaux Farm

1st Place District Acreage Winner - Teche District Category II

Parish Winner - St. Mary

Windell Jackson, League Agronomist; Queen Sugar Adrienne Hulin; and Kevin Breaux

Laviolette Farms

2nd Place District Acreage Winner - Teche District Category II

Parish Winner - St. Martin

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1st Place District Acreage Winner - Teche District Category IV

Windell Jackson, League Agronomist; Queen Sugar Adrienne Hulin; Linda and Glenn Freyou

WATCH FOR MORE HIGH YIELD PHOTOS IN THE NEXT ISSUE. . .

Texas Bus Trip Highlights

by Herman Waguespack, Jr.

Although the week of March 3 was a cold one, the warm welcome we received from our Texas neighbors made the 2002 Bus Trip both enjoyable and educational. The week started with a Sunday drive to San Antonio, home of the Alamo, the Spurs and the River Walk. Even at 22° F, it's a wonderful city. If you've never been there, it's definitely worth the drive. Those on the trip soon realized they made the right choice and it didn't take long for them to relax and enjoy the journey.

The first event was a half-day guided tour of San Antonio which included stops at three of the five missions in the area. These Spanish-built missions were established along the San Antonio River in the 18th century in an attempt to convert the native Americans to Catholicism. Mission San Jose, Mission Concepcion and Mission San Antonio de Valero (The Alamo) are very historic and collectively formed the foundation for the present-day city of San Antonio. The group also toured the fresh produce distribution center for HEB, a large supermarket chain. As agriculturalists, we can appreciate what it takes to grow and harvest a commodity, but the packaging, marketing and distribution, especially of fresh produce, is a different story. Since consumers have come to expect the highest quality produce at all times, it's a carefully managed system that can't afford delays. The group toured an expansive storage and loading facility complete with fruit ripening bays, and refrigerated holding units. At midnight, every night, produce begins to arrive for sorting and distribution to area stores. Priority is given to produce being sent to the farthest stores to ensure freshness. Even in the "off" hours (after 3 p.m.) front-end loaders were still buzzing the area. Needless to say the tour was quite interesting.

The group's next stop included a tour of the Texas A&M experiment station in Weslaco, Texas. Dr. Jose Amador, station director, welcomed the group and coordinated an extensive demonstration of the many sugarcane research activities conducted at the station. The group was introduced to the many challenges facing the south Texas industry and the research programs in place to address those needs. Water usage is one such issue commanding more attention now than ever before, since the water in the Rio Grande River is shared with Mexico. All of the agricultural commodities produced in the valley, including sugarcane, must be irrigated with water from the river. With increased urban demand for water and Mexican politics, one can only imagine where agriculture ends up on the totem pole! Of course, the variety improvement program along with entomology, fertilization and other cultural practices are still major research areas. Several bright new researchers are working in these areas applying recent technological advances to enhance the research effort. The group was introduced to living proof of the wonders of biotechnology when applied to sugarcane. Sugarcane plants transformed to resist mosaic and applications of glufosinate-ammonium (Liberty, Finale) herbicide are being grown in test plots to measure their agronomic performance. The group was also introduced to a pilot plant designed to extract high dollar value proteins from transformed sugarcane plants. This study, partially funded by the American Sugar Cane League, is progressing very well and is truly cutting-edge technology.

The group was treated to a tour of the factory and field operations of the Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers Cooperative. The Cooperative operates one factory that will crush about 1.6 million tons of cane this season. The cane harvest is accomplished on two "fronts" with 10 Cameco combines; imagine that. All of the combines we saw operating in the valley were on rubber tires. The three tracked harvesters were parked and are only used when needed. It was explained that since wet harvest conditions are not the norm, tracks are unnecessary and frequent movement to area fields would be harder with tracked harvesters. The group also got to see the new Cameco CH 3500 harvester working quite well. A point that was made included the fact that pre-harvest burns are slightly more complicated than here. Even after receiving the required approval to burn, residents and other persons in or around the area must be advised that fields will be burned. This announcement is broadcasted

with loudspeakers to notify illegal aliens that may be hiding in the fields. Can you imagine having that to worry about? It was beneficial for the group to be introduced to the many different issues that face the Texas cane industry. As different as the Texas and Louisiana industries may seem, there are several issues that affect us both. The burning issue is one such challenge that both Louisiana and Texas growers are faced with. Keep in mind that open dialogue often opens doors to solutions. We thank the Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers Cooperative and the Researchers in the valley for a wonderful tour. The hospitality extended toward the group was excellent and this was probably the best tour we have ever had in the valley.

LEFT: The group tours the Alamo in San Antonio.

RIGHT: The group listens to Eddie Hernandez as he explains the variety program at the Texas A & M Experiment Station.

LEFT: Looking at the new Cameco Harvester

RIGHT: Checking out the irrigation system.

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1993 Cameco S32B 2-Row Harvester, SN 9144, Cab & air; 20.8X38 front, 65R28 Rear, 2203 Hours, JD 240 HP engine - $39,900; **1980 single-row Cameco H-7000 Harvester**, SN 818-80 2098, Detroit 371 engine, Hydrostatic drive - $4,950; **6 - Thompson Planters Model 210**, 4" drum hydraulic - $450-$800. Call Joel Luke at (337) 836-9484 or (985) 397-0863.

1995 Cameco Billet Harvester, excellent condition; **Prentice 2100 Loader**. Call Melvin Reed at (318) 481-8157 or (318) 346-4388.

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THE SUGAR BULLETIN

Official Bulletin of the American Sugar Cane League of the U.S.A.

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The Sugar Bulletin

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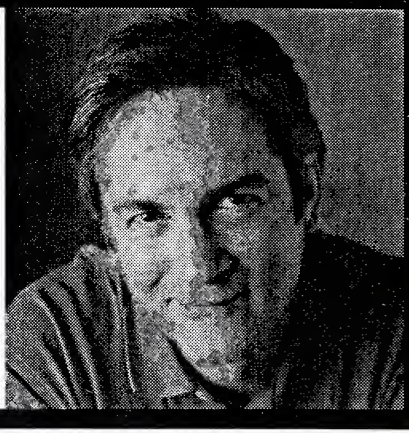

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Truck Weights
Farm Bill - Circumvention Language - Mexico

The State Legislative Committee, chaired by Kenneth Peltier, met in late March to discuss the Harvest Season Permits and to chart a course for our industry, legislatively, to continue to have the privilege of excess-weight permits.

The recommendation of the Committee to the full Board of the League was: (1) to direct the Committee and appropriate staff to work with all parities (inside and outside of our industry) necessary in our efforts to be allowed to haul at higher weight limits, (2) endorse the "lock out" at the scales again for this upcoming crop, (3) to attempt to identify as many options available to growers, processors, and contract haulers to accomplish the task in the future, and (4) in cooperation with state and federal officials, move forward with a proposed plan in a timely manner. The Board approved this plan / concept unanimously.

Subsequently, a meeting was held in Port Allen on April 4th which included growers, processors, trailer manufacturers and sales companies, contract haulers, Department of Ag officials who deal with weights, LaDOTD Weights & Standards, State Police Weights Enforcement, LaDOTD Transportation Research Center, Mike Salassi of LSU AgCenter, and Dr. Freddy Roberts of Louisiana Tech College of Engineering. There were some 50+ people in attendance. Dr. Roberts did a study for the state approximately 2 years ago on the damage to state roadways caused by excess and overweight vehicles. This study was funded by the Federal Highway Administration through the LaDOTD and completed by Dr. Roberts. The study clearly indicated that additional wear to the road bed was occurring with heavier weight, but of even more concern was the fact that weights in excess of the 100,000 pound GVW permitted hauls did much higher damage. An example given is that 10,000 pounds over the 100,000 pound GVW did not necessarily do just 10% more damage, but in fact was causing as much as 25% more damage to the roadway. Thus, the concern for holding all loads to the legal limit.

The meeting lasted approximately three hours with discussions of options that may be examined so as to give as many alternatives to the industry to be able to keep the higher hauling limits, while doing our part to reduce the damage to the roads and highways in Louisiana. With each suggestion that was ultimately listed by the group, it was requested of Mike Salassi to attempt to ascertain the cost of each option for each "unit" and estimate the cost for the industry. As all of us are keenly aware, good decisions cannot be made without all of the facts. Additionally, the group attempted to explore as many alternatives available for meeting our hauling goals so as to give as many options as possible to all individuals and companies affected. The expression was that "one shoe does not fit everyone," so no reasonable suggestions were rejected.

The government officials attending complimented the industry for its efforts in looking for a solution to an obvious concern. They are committed to working with us to try to secure the necessary permit allowance as the industry has demonstrated that it wants to be good citizen, but that we do need excess-weight permits for our industry. Our efforts in this task will be coordinated with those interested in our industry and the government officials that police and regulate our transportation operations.

In closing on this issue, I wish to thank all of

the growers, mills and contract haulers who have been making a diligent effort to maintain their loads at the 100,000 pound GVW and below. Because of you, local, state and federal officials are willingly working with your League in an attempt to secure an excess hauling permit for your use for years to come. I wish to thank all of you who have been diligently working to "stay legal." It surely makes the task easier when public officials see an entire industry trying to do the right thing. Please keep it up!

Farm Bill - Circumvention Language - Mexico

The Farm Bill negotiators, at this writing, have moved into private meeting rooms in the Capital in an effort to hammer out differences on commodity loan rates. Hopefully, by the time you read this article, we will have a Farm Bill inclusive of a sugar program. In my last conversation just prior to writing this article, it was indicated by our Washington reps that our language was moving along well in the process. Our opponents appear to be more focused on the "stuffed molasses" /circumvention language in the trade bill at this time, for that is where we are seeing the most activity by them. I am ever hopeful that the Congress will get a bill out very soon. Maybe, just maybe, by the end of April. That would mean that this article would be an after thought, and that is just fine with me.

In the meantime, the U.S. sugar industry's Mexican task force is ready to begin discussions with the Mexican sugar industry representatives. However, it appears that the earliest time for arranging a meeting with that country's sugar reps may not be until June. In the mean time, it appears that our group is united on the issues, and I am hopeful this matter revolving around the NAFTA and its side letter may be resolved also.

On "stuffed molasses." The Commercial users, as earlier mentioned, seemed to be focusing on the circumvention language that Senator Breaux has introduced to close the sugar import loophole. This language is a part of the "trade" package that will hopefully be moving through the Congress soon. The package will include TPA, TAA, and the Andean Trade Pact, as we understand it, all in one package. We will maintain monitoring on this matter.

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Update - USDA WASDE April Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The conference on the farm bill was renewed following the Easter recess and appears at the time of this writing to be progressing into the final stages. The Conference leaders have held a series of closed-door negotiations that are purportedly yielding significant results, but any potential deals have been kept quiet. While Member-to-Member meetings make it more likely that compromises will be reached, the secrecy surrounding those meetings make it difficult to predict with any degree of certainty what will come out of the conference. Clearly, though, momentum seems to be building and an agreement could be forged in the coming days.

Since there were few differences between the House and Senate sugar provisions, the outstanding issues at this time are related to funding: forfeiture penalty, bankruptcy provision and the TRQ reallocation language. The $2.6 billion "cushion" established to deal with differences on sugar, dairy and peanuts has been targeted by others, including vegetable growers, to develop new programs in the 11th hour of negotiations, but sugar's supporters on the Hill were making every effort to ensure that our interests are served. The House Ways and Means Committee has not yet registered its position on the TRQ reallocation language (the Breaux-Feinstein amendment described in the April 2002 issue) but work on that issue may begin at any time.

The broader commodity negotiations remain contentious, though both sides are beginning to work toward mutually acceptable loan rates and target prices. The payment limitations issue remains a significant problem but indications are that Members are starting to move on that front as well, probably by implementing a $2.5 million means test for program participation and possibly including some tweaking of the payment limits for loan gains and fixed and counter cyclical payments. While nothing is certain, it appears that the conferees are leaning against the elimination of generic certificates and the three-entity rule.

USDA WASDE April Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its April World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2001/02 is increased 60,000 short tons from March to 8.03 million short tons, raw value, with beet sugar production rising 50,000 short tons on higher-than-expected sugar recovery. Cane production is up 10,000 due to lessening concerns of freeze damage in Texas. Imports under TRQ rose 15,000 to 1,356,000, while non-program imports rise 15,000 on larger high-tier imports from Mexico. 2001/02 cane sugar production in Louisiana is increased by 4,000 tons to 1,579,000 short tons. Domestic sugar use is decreased 100,000 tons on weak deliveries, resulting in an increase in the projected 2001/02 ending stocks-to-use ratio to 16.9%, compared to 13.9 percent last month. For 2000/01, the ending stocks-to-use ratio is unchanged at 21.4 percent. Stocks held by the Commodity Credit Corporation are increased 90,000.

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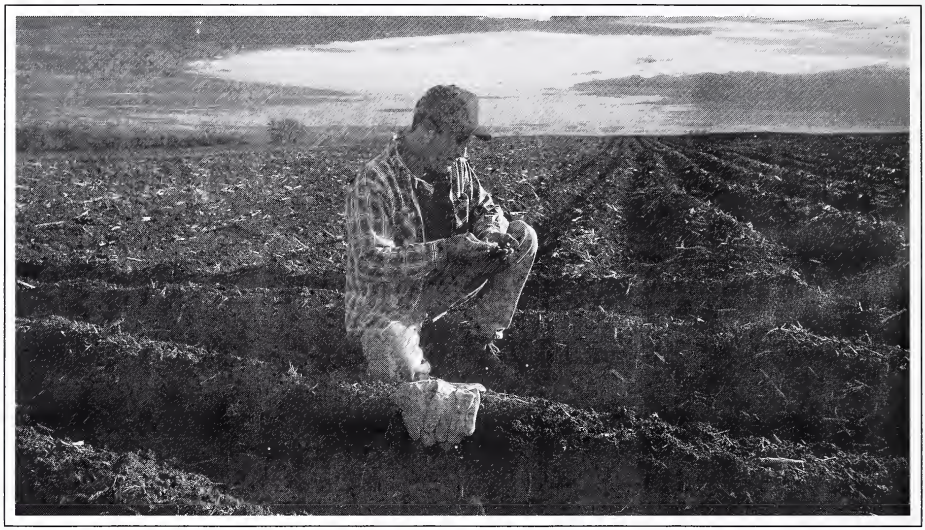

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Fields Are Shaping Up

On April 8 most of the cane belt received between two to nearly four inches of rain. From the same rain, some areas of the Teche received five or more inches of precipitation. At this time most growers had only a portion of their acreage fertilized. The key word is most. There are one or two who had completed their fertilizer applications before the rains. On the Teche, due to the large amount of rain, questions arose about the amount of fertilizer lost. Because the rain fell in such a short time, ran off so quickly, and none of the fertilized cane stayed covered with water for a long time, there should be little or no loss of fertilizer. If a dry fertilizer was broadcast and was not incorporated into the soil there is more of a chance that it could have been washed away by the water as it drained from the fields. After a two-week delay caused by these rains, it is good to see tractors in fields and back at work. Field work was progressing very rapidly before the rains and will do so again with a few more days of sunshine.

Fields are shaping up quite nicely and are still relatively free from weeds and grass. For this time of the year, the 2002 cane is much shorter than we have seen in the last four or five years. Almost everyone will tell you that the height of cane at this time of year does not mean very much and that population is the key to making good yields. As one travels the cane belt and observes fields, approximately 90% of the fields have adequate stands to make a good to average crop. There have been some reports of plant cane problems in fields which were planted with billet seed, as well as some problems in fields which were planted with whole stalk seed.

During planting season, much of the cane belt received a tremendous downpour from a tropical system. Many areas reported six or more inches of hard-packing rain from the system. There is a stand problem in fields of cane on very sandy soils planted a week or so before the deluge. These fields did not mark the row in the fall and are extremely slow in closing the gaps this spring. The author knows of some plant cane fields which have already been plowed out. These particular fields were planted on very sandy soils with billeted seed. They did not make a stand in the fall and the stands did not improve by the time they were plowed. The seed pieces were rotted, and there was no hope that the stand would improve even if the fields were kept.

Herman Waguespack relates a somewhat different situation. Herman reports stand problems in late planted cane on heavy soils. He reports that before planting the fields were forced dry, and that after the cane was planted there was a long period without rain. He sees some weak areas in sandy soil from the hard rain and has also received reports of some plant cane that will be plowed out.

Many of the older stubble fields, especially if they are CP 70-321, are very weak at this time. Acreage data by varieties is reported in *The 2001 Louisiana Sugarcane Variety Survey*. The information for the survey is gathered by the Sugar Parish County Agents and is compiled by Dr. Ben Legendre, St. Gabriel Research Station, and Dr. Ken Gravois, Sugar Research Station,

LSU Ag Center. In the survey, which is published in this issue of *The Sugar Bulletin*, last year's crop was produced with 47.6% of the fields in either second stubble or older cane. Second stubble and older CP 70-321 were grown on nearly 6% of the state's acreage for the 2001 crop, with another 2% of the acreage in first stubble CP 70-321. If history is an indication of what to expect, many of the older fields of CP 70-321 will have to be plowed out. There has always been a problem with CP 70-321 stubble fields (second stubble and older) overwintering, especially when harvested early and hit with killing frosts or freezes in late February or early March. On the other hand, there are fields of older cane which were harvested later and they look as if they will be able to produce another good crop.

Weaker stands can be found in most fields that were used as seed plots for last year's plantings. After fields were harvested for seed, the cane established a good bit of regrowth. Many of these seed plots are not returning to full stands at this time. With the mild winters, this has not been a problem for the last four or five years.

There are several reasons why the state's total sugar production could be lower for the 2002 crop. The number one reason is that there will probably be fewer acres of plant cane going to the mill this year. There are several reasons for this. This year's plant cane stands are weaker than those of the record setting crops. In the fall of 2001, as with every planting since the variety LCP 85-384 became a major variety, less cane was planted with the expectation of keeping more old stubble.

It was forecast that the 2002 crop would be produced with about 50% of its acreage in second stubble and older. Many growers are now only planting between 15 - 20% of their acreage each year. With the mild winters of the past four or five years, older stubble fields have produced very good crops. However, it seems that these older stubble fields react more violently to stress conditions caused by the environment (dry, wet, and cold) than do fields of the younger cane. When grown under stress conditions, fields of old cane do not produce the yields of younger fields of cane grown under the same circumstances. Many growers are concerned as they see their acreage of older stubble increase year after year. For this reason, many growers are anticipating a larger planting this year than they have in previous years. In the effort to reduce acreage of old stubble, more acreage will be used as seed cane.

Another reason for less plant cane going to the mill is the fact that on the whole, fields planted with billeted seed are making very good stands. At the drafting of this article on April 15, there have been no reports of severe stand problems in any significant amount of the acreage planted with billeted seed. Although there are some weak stands, this weakness cannot necessarily be attributed to the fact that the fields were planted with billeted seed. The overwintering, environmental conditions that this year's billet plantings endured were the harshest that the industry has seen since it started experimenting with billet seed. Growers, many of whom had only wanted to plant a little acreage with billet seed, report planting more than 90% of their planting with billet seed. "It sure was easy to plant with mechanical planters and not have to agonize over labor and the quality of their work," is a common report from most who planted billet seed with mechanical planters. Last year when planting combine-harvested seed, most growers report planting ratios of around three to one. This compares to an average of nearly five to one as reported by most growers who were machine planting whole stalk seed. With a lower planting ratio, more cane acreage is going into the ground, and generally plant cane is used for seed.

Although the total sugar produced for the state may be somewhat off, there is still the potential for relatively good yields of sugar per acre. All we need is warm nights, dry weather at the right time, and plenty of sunshine. As was stated at the beginning of this article, 90% of the crop is off to a good start. As usual, it is the bad 10% that catches our eye and is most often written and talked about.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

By James F. Coerver, P.E.
G.E.C., Inc.

LDEQ Under Attack (Again)

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) is under attack yet again; but beware, the attack may simply be a ploy. An unrelenting assault on LDEQ by environmentalists, with the full and enthusiastic support of the news media, continues. Scarcely a day goes by without some repetition of the same accusations and conjectures. The theme of this well organized attack is that LDEQ does not do what environmentalists want done, and therefore, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency must remove Federal authority delegated to LDEQ so that EPA must administer and enforce directly all Federal statutes and regulations.

The recent intensification of verbal assaults came with the release of a report by the controversial Louisiana Legislative Auditor indicating that many minor violations of environmental rules go unpunished, and many fines assessed by LDEQ go uncollected. While the facts in this audit report are probably true, the interpretation that LDEQ is entirely at fault is not only simplistic, it is also grossly unfair. For instance, while LDEQ does have a small legal staff to handle its adjudication responsibilities, it does not (and should not) have the capability to pursue recalcitrants to force them to pay fines imposed by the agency. The latter is a responsibility for the State's Attorney General (AG), but of course the AG is not presently a target of the environmentalists.

Failure to prosecute all environmental violations is also understandable. There are now so many very complicated rules and reporting (paperwork) requirements that few have the capability of complying fully with these, and LDEQ does not, and never can, have the resources necessary to enforce to the letter of the law. While it is true that violation of some of these environmental rules could cause damage to the environment, nearly all of the potential violations, and over 90 percent of the violations cited by LDEQ in my own recent experiences involving dozens of such cases, are either erroneous or involve no damage to the environment. Many actual "violations" are simply report miscalculations or obvious laboratory analysis and reporting errors. The latter is said not so much in criticism of LDEQ, but rather the entire national and local environmental regulatory system. The system is far too complicated, expensive and restrictive, and it got that way at the insistence of environmentalists who have long been able to browbeat Congressmen and State Legislators into doing their biddings or face the wrath of a fully supportive news media. As environmental laws become more and more onerous and complicated, they become more and more costly and difficult for EPA and LDEQ to enforce.

The current environmentalist/news-media effort to discredit LDEQ is simply a well-planned effort to deceive the public and gullible legislators. The *Wall Street Journal* of March 12, 2002, cites a report by the EPA inspector general's office that the entire nation's effort to monitor and enforce pollution levels has fallen behind because of a chronic lack of resources and bureaucratic confusion in state agencies (in

general, not just in Louisiana). The most delinquent region, according to the report, is New England where an average of only 37 percent of the permits needed have been issued, and permit limitations obviously cannot be enforced if permits are not issued.

In the face of all the news-media hype, LDEQ Secretary Dale Givens was compelled to defend the agency. Predictably, he said that LDEQ needed a lot more money to do the job asked, and, of course, environmentalists never quarrel with spending more tax money needlessly on environmental boondoggles, because most tax money comes from regulated industries. After all, the real environmentalist objectives are to overtax and/or over-regulate industries so as to shut them down – not to issue regulatory permits that allow industries to continue operating. A recent news report on actions of the Louisiana Legislature indicates approval of a plan to raise environmental fees (taxes) by a whopping 30 percent, overriding a recent statute purporting to limit runaway LDEQ environmental fee increases to a maximum of 6 percent per year. Here we go again!

The really sad part of this scenario is that showering more money on an already over funded and confused bureaucracy will not solve any problems. Judging from LDEQ's track record, it will only make matters worse. For instance, that agency just wasted $15 million "re-engineering" a functioning bureaucracy to suit "environmental" objectives, and the result has been staff confusion and disorientation that has effectively demoted media experts and promoted more politically correct "environmental generalists." Now, in addition to having unattainable objectives, the agency does not have the internal technical capability to achieve them.

One encouraging thing in the news media is an editorial in the April 13, 2000 edition of *Saturday* (Baton Rouge Advocate) headlined "More money alone will not fix DEQ." Actually the editor would have been more correct if the "alone" had been deleted. There would be a better chance of agency improvement if funds were cut rather than increased, and more efficient operation of the agency demanded. It would also help if the agency were allowed to concentrate enforcement effort on infractions involving actual or potential environmental damage instead of trying to collect millions in fines for two-bit clerical errors, but environmentalists would surely object with fervency.

The environmentalists are asking for one thing that could solve the "problem," and that is for EPA to withdraw NPDES authority from LDEQ and administer the program directly. This would relieve LDEQ of an onerous burden, get the environmentalists off their backs, and greatly reduce the agency's funding and staffing needs. This would really not inconvenience permit applicants because Federal rules do not prevent dischargers from proceeding even if it takes EPA years to get around to issuing a permit. However, withdrawal of NPDES authority is only a pipe dream because EPA does not now have, and never did have, the resources to run the NPDES program as promulgated, and could not do it nearly as well as LDEQ is doing it today.

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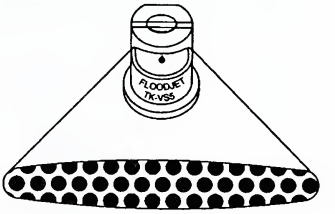

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THE 2001 LOUISIANA SUGARCANE VARIETY SURVEY

Benjamin L. Legendre, St. Gabriel Research Station
and
Kenneth Gravois, Sugar Research Station
LSU Ag Center

A sugarcane variety survey was conducted during the summer of 2001 by County Agents in the 24 sugarcane growing parishes of Louisiana to determine the variety makeup and distribution across the sugarcane belt in the State. The information presented in this report was summarized from those individual parish surveys.

Agents in each sugarcane-producing parish collected acreage figures by variety and crop year from growers in their respective parishes. Ten varieties were named in the survey. They were: CP 65-357; CP 70-321; CP 72-370; CP 74-383; CP 79-318; LCP 82-89; LHo 83-153; LCP 85-384; HoCP 85-845; and HoCP 91-555. Crop-year was divided into four categories. They were: plant-cane, first-stubble, second-stubble and third-stubble and older crops. Some information was also collected from the local Farm Service Agency office when the Agents had difficulty in obtaining all the needed information from the growers. Since this information was collected during the growing season and included input from many persons, acreages may differ from the final total crop acreage figures collected at harvest.

Actual acreages at harvest for each parish, regional totals, and the statewide total are shown in Table 1. Figure 1 shows the parishes in which sugarcane is grown in the State. The statewide total of acreage reported in the survey was 482,080 acres although the final acreage reported by Agents in December 2001 was 493,773 acres. It is important to note that the total acreage of 482,080 is not the "official" total sugarcane acreage in Louisiana; however, it does represent approximately 97.6% of the final reported acreage. Total acres for the 2001 survey for each Region based on the 493,733 acres for the State were as follows: 211,175 acres for the Teche Region; 174,514 acres for the River-Bayou Lafourche Region; and 108,084 acres for the Northern Region.

Table 1. Estimated total sugarcane acres by parish and region for 2001[1].

Teche Region		River-Bayou Lafourche Region		Northern Region	
Parish	Acres	Parish	Acres	Parish	Acres
Acadia	4,679	Ascension	15,303	Avoyelles	21,942
Calcasieu	6,058	Assumption	41,876	East Baton Rouge	530
Cameron	500	Iberville	36,224	Evangeline	2,474
Iberia	63,537	Lafourche	31,525	Pointe Coupee	31,566
Jeff Davis	8,400	St. Charles	2,750	Rapides	14,225
Lafayette	16,319	St. James	25,236	St. Landry	21,888
St. Martin	36,100	St. John	10,700	West Baton Rouge	15,459
St. Mary	44,026	Terrebonne	10,900		
Vermillion	32,056				
Total	211,175	Total	174,514	Total	108,084
Total all regions: 493,773					

[1]Estimates are based on 2001 variety survey information from County Agents.

Figure 1. Louisiana sugarcane growing parishes

The estimated statewide sugarcane acreage in percent by variety and crop year is shown in Table 2. The leading variety for 2001 was LCP 85-384, with 78% of the total acreage followed by CP 70-321 with 8% and HoCP 85-845 with 7%. These three varieties, along with HoCP 91-555, are the only four varieties currently recommended for commercial planting in Louisiana (Legendre 2001). LCP 85-384 has been the leading variety since 1998 when it occupied 43% of the state's acreage (Table 7). No other variety occupied more than 1% in the current survey (Table 2). Only two varieties, LCP 85-384 and HoCP 91-555, showed an increase in the acreage grown in 2001when compared to the previous year (Table 7). LCP 85-384, released for commercial planting in 1993, is the first variety to reach more than 70% of the total acreage since CP 65-357, released in 1973, when it occupied 71% of the acreage grown in the early 1980's. LCP 85-384 is a high yielding, excellent stubbling variety. The variety produces a large number of small stalks and consistently out yields the other three recommended commercial varieties in tons of cane and sugar per acre.

In recent years, there has been a tendency to increase the number of years of a crop cycle because of better stubbling varieties, particularly LCP 85-384 and HoCP 85-845, and relatively mild winters in both1998 and 1999. Whereas the normal crop cycle consisted of a plant-cane and two stubble crops, many growers today are now keeping third- and older stubble, extending their crop cycle to four or five years. In 2001, 19.1%, or more than 93,000 acres, was in third- or older stubble (Table 2), an increase of 8,000 acres from the previous year (Legendre and Gravois 2000). There was also a significant increase from 25.2% to 28.5% in the amount of cane kept as second-stubble from 2000 to 2001, respectively. Conversely, this meant that there was less plant-cane in 2001 (23.6%) when compared to the amount of plant-cane in 2000 (27.8%). Table 3 shows the distribution of plant-cane and stubble crops by region. The percentage of the crop made up by plant-cane, first-stubble, second-stubble and third- and older stubble varied from region to region with the Northern Region having the lowest percentage of plant-cane but the highest percentages of first- and second-stubble crops.

Table 2. Estimated statewide sugarcane acreage percentage by variety and crop year, 2001[1]

Variety	Plant-Cane	First-Stubble	Second-Stubble	Third-Stubble And Older	Total
	----------%----------				
CP 65-357	<1	<1	1	2	1
CP 70-321	1	7	12	13	8
CP 72-370	<1	1	1	<1	1
CP 74-383	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
CP 79-318	0	<1	<1	1	<1
LCP 82-89	<1	1	2	2	1
LHo 83-153	<1	1	1	2	1
LCP 85-384	88	81	72	72	78
HoCP 85-845	5	7	9	8	7
HoCP 91-555	4	1	<1	<1	1
Others	<1	<1	1	1	1
Total Acres	120,072	140,687	139,520	93,494	493,733
Percent Total Crop (%)	23.6	28.8	28.5	19.1	

[1]Based on 2001 variety survey information from County Agents.

Table 3. Estimated sugarcane distribution by Region and crop year, 2001[1].

Crop Year	Teche	River-Bayou Lafourche	Northern	State Total
Plant-Cane				
Acres	51,526	47,469	21,077	120,072
%	24.4	27.2	19.5	23.6
First-Stubble				
Acres	55,117	49,038	36,532	140,687
%	26.1	28.1	33.8	28.8
Second-Stubble				
Acres	60,185	47,991	31,344	139,520
%	28.5	27.5	29.0	28.5
Third-Stubble and Older				
Acres	44,347	30,016	19,131	93,494
%	21.0	17.2	17.7	19.1
Total Acres	211,175	174,514	108,084	493,773

[1] Based on 2001 variety survey information from County Agents.

The percentage in sugarcane acreage by variety and crop year for the three regions is shown in Tables 4, 5 and 6. LCP 85-384 is the leading variety for all three regions. Its percentages range from 75% in the River-Bayou Lafourche Region to 79% in both the Teche and Northern Region. CP 70-321 is the second leading variety in both the Teche Region (12%) and Northern Region (10%) followed by HoCP 85-845 with 5% in both regions while HoCP 85-845 is the second leading variety in the River-Bayou Lafourche Region (12%) followed by CP 70-321 with 4%. No other variety occupies more than 2% of the total area in any of the Regions. It is interesting to note that the percentage of planted area for LCP 85-384 for both the plant-cane and first-stubble crops generally exceeded 80% for all three regions in the 2001 survey.

Table 4. Estimated Teche Region acreage percentage by variety and crop year, 2001[1]

Variety	Plant-Cane	First-Stubble	Second-Stubble	Third-Stubble And Older	Total
CP 65-357	<1	0	1	1	<1
CP 70-321	8	10	15	16	12
CP 72-370	1	1	1	<1	1
CP 74-383	<1	<1	<1	0	<1
CP 79-318	0	<1	<1	0	<1
LCP 82-89	<1	2	2	3	2
LHo 83-153	0	<1	<1	<1	<1
LCP 85-384	84	81	74	75	79
HoCP 85-845	4	4	6	5	5
HoCP 91-555	2	1	<1	<1	1
Others	<1	<1	<1	1	<1

[1]Based on 2001 variety survey information from County Agents.

Table 5. Estimated River-Bayou Lafourche Region sugarcane acreage percentage by variety and crop year, 2001[1]

Variety	Plant-Cane	First-Stubble	Second-Stubble	Third-Stubble And Older	Total
CP 65-357	<1	1	1	1	1
CP 70-321	2	3	6	8	4
CP 72-370	<1	1	2	1	1
CP 74-383	0	0	0	0	0
CP 79-318	0	<1	<1	0	<1
LCP 82-89	<1	1	2	1	1
LHo 83-153	1	2	3	4	2
LCP 85-384	85	76	69	69	75
HoCP 85-845	8	13	15	15	12
HoCP 91-555	3	1	<1	<1	1
Others	1	<1	1	1	1

[1]Based on 2001 variety survey information from County Agents.

Table 6. Estimated Northern sugarcane acreage percentage by variety and crop year, 2001[1]

Variety	Plant-Cane	First-Stubble	Second-Stubble	Third-Stubble And Older	Total
CP 65-357	0	<1	1	6	1
CP 70-321	1	7	17	15	10
CP 72-370	0	<1	<1	0	<1
CP 74-383	<1	<1	1	<1	<1
CP 79-318	0	<1	1	0	<1
LCP 82-89	1	1	1	0	1
LHo 83-153	<1	<1	1	1	<1
LCP 85-384	87	85	71	72	79
HoCP 85-845	2	4	6	6	5
HoCP 91-555	1	1	<1	0	2
Others	<1	1	1	1	1

[1]Based on 2001 variety survey information from County Agents.

Sugarcane variety trends over the last five years are shown in Table 7. Only two varieties, LCP 85-384 and HoCP 91-555, increased in 2001 from the previous year by 7 and 1 percentage points, respectively. All other varieties either decreased in area or remained the same from the previous year. CP 70-321 had the largest decrease at 5 percentage points. HoCP 91-555, released in 1999, increased in planted area in all regions from the previous year (Tables 4, 5 and 6) but still occupies only 1% of the total area grown to sugarcane in the state. The acreage planted to HoCP 85-845 had shown an upward trend from 1997 until 1999; however, the acreage decreased by 1 percentage point between 2000 and 2001.

Table 7. Louisiana sugarcane variety trends 1997-2001[1].

	% of State total acreage by year					1 yr. Change
Variety	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	
CP 65-357	6	3	1	1	1	0
CP 70-321	35	29	20	13	8	-5
CP 72-370	7	5	3	2	1	-1
CP 74-383	2	1	<1	<1	<1	0
CP 79-318	3	2	1	<1	<1	0
LCP 82-89	10	7	5	2	1	-1
LHo 83-153	3	3	3	2	1	-1
LCP 85-384	29	43	58	71	78	+7
HoCP 85-845	4	6	8	8	7	-1
HoCP 91-555	<1	<1	<1	<1	1	1
Others	<1	1	<1	<1	1	1

[1]Based on annual variety survey reports from County Agents in sugarcane-producing parishes, 1997-2001.

It is anticipated that LCP 85-384 will continue to gain in popularity for the near term because of its superior yielding ability in tons of cane and sugar per acre and will remain the top variety in the state until comparable or superior varieties are released for commercial production from the breeding program. It is further anticipated that the remaining varieties will continue to decrease in total acreage with the possible exception of HoCP 91-555. This variety is being considered as a possible alternative to LCP 85-384 by some growers; however, it is not anticipated that this variety will ever gain the acceptance by growers as did LCP 85-384. From outfield test data, HoCP 91-555 is a high yielding, good stubbling variety (Guillot *et al.*2002). It is mostly erect in growth habit and suited to both soldier and combine harvesting systems; whereas, LCP 85-384 frequently lodges and is brittle and difficult to harvest when lodged. It is better suited for combine harvesting.

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the assistance of the County Agents for soliciting the sugarcane variety information published in this survey. We also want to thank the sugarcane producers that took the time and effort to respond to the survey from their Agents.

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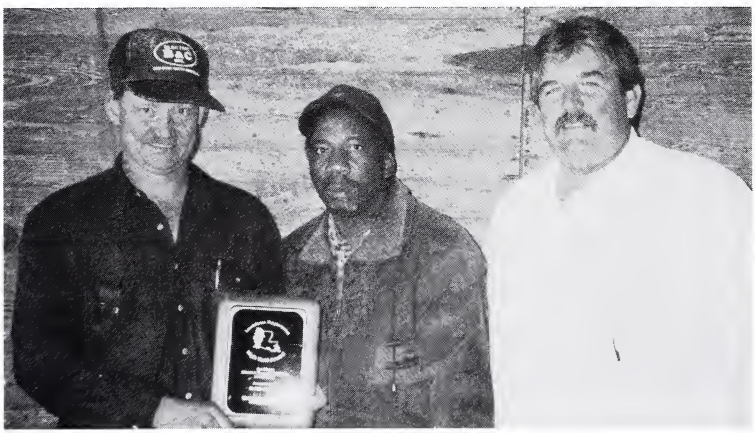

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Volume 80, No. 9 **June 2002**

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Official Bulletin of the American Sugar Cane League of the U.S.A.

Announcing the

ANNUAL CONTACT COMMITTEE MEETING

of the

AMERICAN SUGAR CANE LEAGUE OF THE U.S.A., INC.

Thursday, July 11, 2002

9:00 a.m.

Howard Johnson Lodge
201 North Canal Blvd.
Thibodaux, Louisiana

(See page 13 for details)

The Sugar Bulletin

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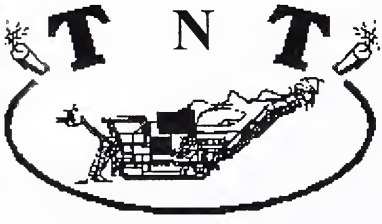

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Farm Bill Meetings
Mexico Circumvention Language - Excess Weights

Well, the Farm Bill has finally passed the Congress after much deliberation by the House - Senate Conference Committees. The bill, as best as can be determined, appears to have all of the elements or tools that are needed by the USDA and the administration to successfully manage the program. The next area, as it regards the farm bill, will be the compilation and writing of the rules and regulations for the management of the program. The League has been receiving some suggestions in this area and will be working with the National Legislative Committee and Farm Bureau on some suggested items that appear to be technical language issues.

The League has set up three Farm Bill Information Meetings on June 19th and 20th to brief League members on the new program and how the bill is intended to work. The first of the meetings will be held on June 19th at 4:00 p.m. in New Iberia at the Best Western on Highway 14. On the morning of the 20th, the second meeting will be held in Thibodaux at the Howard Johnson Lodge at 9:00 a.m.. The third meeting will follow at 3:00 p.m. in Port Allen at the Holiday Inn on Highway 415.

We have asked the Washington representatives to attend, and intend to invite the FSA people including Willie Cooper. A notice of the meetings is to be included in this bulletin and a direct notice will be sent to all members. If anyone should have any question concerning the bill, please attend one of the meetings so that all issues or concerns can be directly addressed.

This legislation has been a long time in the making, but we feel it is an excellent piece of legislation. There are very many people to thank, but to start we should all commend the Louisiana Congressional delegation and their staff for their continued support and votes. These members, some of whom have no cane physically grown in their districts, continue to support our positive efforts on sugar legislation. Secondly, the House and Senate Committees and their staffers. There were many other people on the hill who worked on this legislation with our Washington reps, and to them we say thanks also. And, last but not least, I would wish to than our Washington-based representatives and the members of the League and the industry who gave so much of their time in this worthy effort. To all who had a hand in the making of this sugar policy, and on behalf of the entire industry, I thank you.

Please make note of the dates, locations and times of the information/educational meetings and plan to attend. These meetings are for your information. Too often, ungrounded rumors are started because of misinformation. Therefore, the League will make every effort to bring the membership up to "speed," as best as possible, at these three meetings. See you then!

Mexico Circumvention Language

The resolutions of these two issues are still pending but are squarely on a front

burner. Rather than be repetitive or redundant, I suggest that you refer to the WASHINGTON UPDATE for information and status on these two issues. Additionally, Don Wallace has, in this same article outlined the "Sugar Provisions" of importance included in the Farm Security and Investment Act of 2002.

Excess Weights

The recent revelation in state newspapers declaring the highways of Louisiana the worst, being only second to California in terms of poor condition. This report has been in the making and is predictable as the first public salvo, not necessarily by but maybe for the Louisiana Department of Transportation to help with bringing public attention for the needs of funds to keep our state roads in better condition. As expressed over the past two years, this news was inevitable. While not laying any direct blame, and in fact, the article mentions road bed and soil type problems, you can bet that everyone involved (politicians, design & consulting engineers, highway contractors, and others) will be looking for places to point their fingers in a hope of finding a substantial source of revenue to improve our road ways. I think the League and the industry are on the right track and are in a position to show everyone on the local, state, and federal level that this industry is addressing the concern, up-front and pro-actively.

There are never any guarantees that we will be able to keep the heavier loads into the future, but I believe that this industry is on the right track, if in fact there is a track to presently be traveling. I commend the leadership of the League and the industry for looking toward the future several years back and coming forward with a game plan that might insure the higher harvest season weights.

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AMERICAN SUGAR CANE LEAGUE

FARM BILL MEETINGS

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June 20, 2002
9:00 a.m.
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June 20, 2002
3:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn Express
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Port Allen, LA

WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Completed, Sugar Program Improved
Mexico Task Force Meets - Senate TPA Battles Continue
USDA WASDE May Report Released

The conference on the farm bill was completed in late April and the House and Senate approved the conference report in early May, followed by a White House signing ceremony on May 13. As we reported previously, the sugar provisions contained in the conference report appear to contain every policy objective of the industry.

Sugar Provisions in Farm Security and Investment Act of 2002

1. **Loan Program.** Non-recourse loan program reauthorized through fiscal 2007 at 18 cents per pound for raw cane sugar and 22.90 cents per pound for refined beet sugar (essentially the same level since 1985).
   - Loan rates may be reduced, at the Secretary of Agriculture's discretion, if foreign producers reduce their export subsidies and support levels below their current WTO commitments.
   - In-process beet and cane syrups can be put under loan.
   - Sugar placed under loan in September can be forfeited at the end of that month.
   - The 100-point surcharge in CCC interest rates for sugar loans is eliminated.
2. **Inventory Management.** Provides authority to the Secretary to impose domestic marketing allotments in order to balance the markets, avoid forfeitures, and comply with the United States' substantial sugar-import commitments under the WTO and the NAFTA.
   - The cost of storing excess production is shifted from the government to the industry. When allotments are in place, processors who have expanded marketings (sugar sales to cane refiners, grocers, food manufacturers or other commercial users) in excess of the rate of growth in domestic sugar demand will have to postpone sale of some sugar, and either store it at their own expense or sell it for other than domestic food use.
   - No acreage or production controls on sugarbeet or sugarcane farmers.
   - No limits on how much beet or cane processors can process.
   - Automatically trigger off when imports for domestic food use exceed 1.532 million short tons (mst - the total of U.S. import obligations: 1.256 mst, WTO; .276 mst, Mexico). Thus, imposition of marketing allotments is contingent on the resolution of import-quota circumvention and second-tier Mexican sugar import problems.
   - Additional authority for the Secretary to reduce CCC sugar stocks and the potential for future sugar loan forfeitures by accepting bids for CCC sugar in return for reducing plantings.
3. **No-Cost.** The Secretary is directed to operate the policy, to the maximum extent practicable, at no cost to the U.S. Treasury by avoiding sugar loan forfeitures.
4. **Marketing Assessments.** Eliminated. This special tax on sugar producers, costing producers about $40 million per year, was suspended in fiscal years 2000 and 2001, but was scheduled to resume in fiscal 2002 and 2003.
5. **Forfeiture Penalty.** Eliminated. In the 1996 Farm Bill, sugar became the only

commodity program to require producers to make a special payment to the government – one cent per pound – for each pound of sugar forfeited to the government.

6. **Sugar Storage Facility Loan Program.** Will extend to sugar processors the type of storage facility loan program available to grain and other crop farmers, and will facilitate orderly marketing of sugar.
7. **Reporting Requirements.** Expanded reporting requirements will better enable the Secretary to track importation of high-sugar content products created for the purpose of circumventing the U.S. sugar import quota.

Source: American Sugar Alliance
May 15, 2002

The appropriations process will soon become the focus of agricultural groups and legislators. As in past years, we can anticipate that anti-sugar amendments will be offered when the agricultural appropriations measures move the House and Senate floors. While we have been successful in past years in fighting off these attacks on sugar provisions in the appropriations bills, and support for the sugar provisions (i.e. votes against anti-sugar amendments) was at an historic high during the farm bill process, we should be ready for another tough fight this summer. Unlike previous years, Members of Congress have also warned that amendments to tighten payment limitations will be offered on appropriations legislation, meaning that sugar producers will not be alone in fighting the annual "farm bill" fight in appropriations.

Mexico Task Force Meets

The Mexican Task Force held meetings in Washington, DC in late May to discuss the ongoing efforts to resolve the US-Mexico sugar/sweetener dispute. In addition, the task force met with their counterparts representing the Corn Refiners Association. The sugar task force plans to travel to Mexico in early June to meet with Mexican industry officials and, possibly, government officials.

Senate TPA Battles Continue

At the time of this writing, the Senate is debating amendments to the trade promotion authority (TPA) package, which also includes Trade Adjustment Assistance and Andean trade legislation. A controversial amendment by Senators Mark Dayton (D-MN) and Larry Craig (R-ID), allowing any senator to raise a point of order against a trade provision that would change US trade remedy laws (i.e. anti-dumping and countervailing duty laws), has been approved despite the threat of a presidential veto. The anti-circumvention language crafted by Senator John Breaux (D-LA) is a part of the Senate's TPA/TAA package and the leadership is urging that no more amendments be accepted. While our opponents continue to attack the Breaux language, Senator Breaux and the other members of the Sugar Caucus have prepared well for the battle.

USDA WASDE May Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its May World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2002/03 is 8,750,000 short tons. 2001/02 production was estimated at 8,004,000 tons, 26,000 below the April estimate. Cane sugar production for 2002/03 is projected at 4,200,000 tons, while 2001/02 production decreased by 26,000 tons due to lower output in Florida and Puerto Rico. Beet sugar production is projected at 4,500,000 tons for 2002/03, a 500,000 increase over 2001/02. Imports under TRQ fell 177,157 tons, reflecting the recent CQE exchanges, while non-program imports are unchanged at 90,000. Non-program imports are projected at 60,000 in 2002/03. 2001/02 cane sugar production in Louisiana is decreased by 4,000 tons to 1,575,000 short tons, while 2002/03 production is projected at 1,700,000. 2001/02 domestic sugar use is again decreased by 100,000 tons, but the slightly lower supply numbers result in a decrease in the projected 2001/02 ending stocks-to-use ratio to 16.0 percent, compared to 16.9 percent last month. Stocks held by the Commodity Credit Corporation are decreased by 129,000 short tons.

FALLOW GROUND PROGRAM:

- After cultivation and beds have been formed, apply **Prowl 3 qts./acre plus Atrazine or Sencor.**

  Sugarcane beds should be free of trash or clods at the time of application.

- A shallow incorporation (1-2 inches) with a Lilliston-type-Lely Roterra set to cut 2 or 3 inches deep is recommended.

- A minimum interval of 60 days between Prowl 3.3 EC application and planting of sugarcane is required.

- 2 weeks before planting apply glyphosate (Roundup Ultramax) to eliminate any weed escapes.

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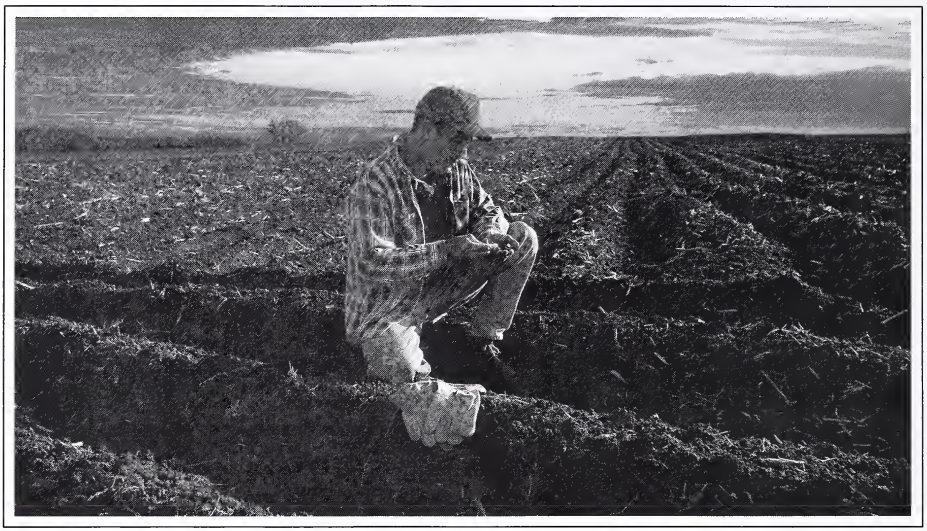

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Crop Report - Contact Committee Meeting American Society of Sugar Cane Technologists

Up till now the crop has had just the right weather conditions of hot days to warm up the soil and dry weather to encourage cane to tiller. Most stands have improved greatly in both plant cane fields and stubble fields. Many growers are now telling of fields of older stubble that they plowed out with regrets because the stands were starting to fill in. At this time all the cane belt could use a good soaking rain. Cane fields on clay soils are starting to show obvious signs of the lack of moisture. The lack of moisture is not as obvious in fields on the sandier soils. As one observes the weather radar on the afternoon of May 17th it would appear that all of the cane belt is receiving a much needed rain.

As the stands develop fields planted with billeted seed for the most part appear to be as good as fields planted with whole stalk seed. However, under stress conditions such as sugarcane beetle damage, wire worm infestations, and seed covered with too much soil at planting, fields planted with whole stalk seed seem to have survived better. Many growers are still undecided whether they will plant billets or not. Most growers are of the opinion that if they have labor and the seed supply is fairly straight they will plant whole stalk seed.

Contact Committee Meeting

With each new crop there are new problems and questions to be faced by the Louisiana Sugar Industry. Each year at the Contact Committee Meeting these problems are discussed and possible solutions to them are presented. The 2002 Contact Committee Meeting is scheduled for July 11th. It is to begin at 9:00 a.m. at the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge in Thibodaux. Topics such as billet planting, cane delivery methods, cane quality, and weight limitations will be discussed at this year's meeting. The following are some of the topics and hopefully some of the questions that will be answered at this year's Contact Committee Meeting.

Estimations are that about 50% of the 2001 planting was planted with billeted seed. The winter 2002 was the most severe winter the sugar industry has had since it started experimenting with billet planting. How well did billet planted fields overwinter and how do the stands of billeted seed compare to the stands of whole stalk seed? Other important questions are, can the planting rate of billet seed be reduced while still producing acceptable plant cane stands and yields; does it really cost more to plant billet seed than whole stalk seed?

How can we become more efficient with the deliveries of cane to the mill? Perhaps there is a partial answer to this question by changing delivery methods. To this end, Lula-Westfield mills are in the process of developing an alternative to the standard trucks and trailers used for cane deliveries. They are now looking into the cost and efficiency of a bin system for cane deliveries. The system would require one truck and one trailer to service 15 delivery bins. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the bin system of cane deliveries?

The topic of higher quality cane deliveries to the mill is a subject that has been covered numerous times. The industry is still looking for methods to encourage the delivery of higher quality cane and methods by which these deliveries can be profitable to both the grower and to the miller. In previous Contact Committee Meetings discussions have centered around the different components that reduce the quality of cane being delivered to the mill. Data collected over numerous years indicate that too much low sugar/no sugar material is being delivered to the sugar mills. What is the advantage to both cane growers and cane processors if 5% to10% of this material remained in the field, but nearly the same amount of sugar per acre was delivered to the mill and recovered at the mill?

The Louisiana Sugar Industry is extremely fortunate to receive special permits each year which allows deliveries of 100,000 lbs. during the harvest season. This is the only industry in the state which has this privilege. A report from a study which shows how much damage is caused by the 100,000 lb. loads has already been completed. This report is already in the hands of state transportation officials and will soon be in the hands of federal transportation officials. In order to maintain this privilege this industry must show that it is doing all in its power not to exceed the 100,000 lbs. limit. Of the several approaches which may be taken to this problem (addition of an axle, lighter trailers, or bin system), what is the most cost-effective?

Information and data presented at the contact committee meeting will be informative to both growers and processors. The contact committee meeting allows for discussion between those who present topics and the audience. So feel free to ask questions of those who present information, and please share any ideas for needed research on the topics that are covered by the program or topics not covered.

Dedicated Research Funding for 2002

Each year researchers who are working in one of the many fields of sugar production or processing submit research proposals to the American Sugar Cane League's Dedicated Research Funding Committee. The committee is a ten-member panel. The chairman plus four other members are actively involved in the processing of sugar and they are very knowledgeable of the research needs of processors. The other five members are cane growers and they are knowledgeable of the research needs and problems faced by cane growers. The process of selecting the most interesting and promising projects is a full two-day undertaking. The meeting generally starts at 8:00 a.m. in the morning and finishes somewhere around 6:00 p.m. Each year the dollar value of the requests far exceeds the amount of money the committee has to spend. Careful attention is given to each proposal so that the industry gets a maximum amount of research and information for its dollar. This year there was a total of 54 proposals whose total requested more than $1,000,000 in funding.

The request or funding categories can be broken-down into four main divisions. The first category is "crop improvement." This category has three subcategories which include *a general category*, *biotechnology*, and *breeding*. The general requests are for funds to help defray the cost of maintaining the physical part of the breeding program, such as greenhouse maintenance, fertilizer, herbicide and labor. Biotechnology includes new methods of adding to the cane breeders' knowledge of what is happening when crosses are made. Funds are also needed to supplement the day to day requirements of the crossing and selection work at both stations. The total amount allocated to all projects, by the committee, was a little more than $576,000. Of the total dollars allocated, about $221,000 was earmarked for ten proposals in the "crop improvement" category.

The next category is "crop production." The subcategories are *cultural practices and ripening*, *economics*, *fertilization*, and *precision Ag*. Many of the committee members were very impressed with the proposals examining precision Ag. Nine of the twelve proposals in the "crop production" category were funded for a little more than $95,000.

The third category is "crop protection." There are three subcategories which include

entomology, *plant pathology,* and *weed control.* There were twelve requests for funding in this category. Ten projects were funded for a little less than $107,000.

The final category is "processing." The two subcategories receiving funding this year were *cane and juice quality* and *factory processes and losses*. In this category, researchers submitted seventeen requests for funding. The committee funded twelve of the requests for nearly $154,000.

At the March board meeting of the American Sugar Cane League the Chairman of the Dedicated Funding Committee, Roddy Hulett, reported the actions of the committee and the funding amount for each category. He noted that the Dedicated Research Funds are collected especially for research and are not part of the League's regular budget. The original purpose of these funds was to encourage adventuresome thinking. In other words the funds were intended for projects which have very poor probability of return. However, if these high-risk projects were to come to fruition, the dividends to the industry could be enormous. Over the years, at both state and federal research stations, funding have increased very little. It is now to the point that our dedicated scientists need this money (Dedicated Research Funding) to do their basic work. They no longer have excess money to spend on experimental and unproven test projects.

Field Day Schedule

As always, growers are urged to attend their local field day. No matter how many times one attends field days there's always something new to learn. You are urged not only to attend your parish field day, but also to attend the field days at the sugar breeding/research stations. There is a lot of the behind the stage work which goes into development of new varieties, into data collection, and research projects which very few growers have a chance to see. About their field day this year Dr. Ed Richard, Research Leader / Location Coordinator at the USDA/ARS Research Facility in Houma, LA, reports, "This will be a field day unlike all the others because it is primarily designed to show participants the research that's going on behind the scenes - research that is difficult to demonstrate at typical field days." The Terrebonne Parish Area Sugarcane Field Day on June 21 will originate at the Houma Laboratory and **NOT** at Ardoyne Farm as in previous years. The cane growers of Vermilion Parish invite all those who are interested to attend their Parish Sugarcane Summer School on July 10 at the Iberia Research Station in Jeanerette, LA. All growers are also invited to attend the LSU Area Sugarcane Field Day at the Sugar Research Station at St. Gabriel, LA. The date for this field day is July 17. The personnel from the research stations remind growers that a visit to the stations is welcomed at anytime for it gives researchers an opportunity to interact with those for whom they are working.

A list of dates and times of upcoming parish field days and other sugar related events is provided by Sugarcane Specialist Dr. Ben Legendre. Dr. Legendre notes, "The times listed are for the actual start of the function itself. Please note that registration of each of the field day programs generally begins at least one hour prior to the event." They are as follows:

May 31 - 9:30 am St. James/Ascension Parish Sugarcane Field Day
Welcome Plantation, Welcome, LA

June 21 - 9:00 am Terrebonne Parish Area Sugarcane Field Day
USDA-ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA (Please note that field day program will originate at the Houma Laboratory and **NOT** the Ardoyne Farm location)

June 26 - 28 32nd Annual Joint Meeting of the Florida and Louisiana Divisions, ASSCT, Amelia Island Plantation, Florida

June 27 - 30, 2002 Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation Convention,
Mariott Hotel, New Orleans, LA

July 10 - 4:00 pm Vermilion Parish Sugarcane Summer School
Iberia Research Station, Jeanerette, LA

July 11 - 9:00 am Annual Contact Committee Meeting of the American Sugar Cane League, Howard Johnson Lodge,

Thibodaux, LA

July 17 - 9:00 am LSU Area Sugarcane Field Day (Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Charles/St. John, West Baton Rouge) Sugar Research Station, St. Gabriel, LA

July 18 - 8:30 am Lafourche Parish Sugarcane Field Day
American Legion Home, Raceland, LA

July 23 - 2:00 pm Assumption Parish Sugarcane Tour and Field Day
American Legion
Hall, Labadieville, LA

July 24 - 4:30 pm St. Mary Parish Sugarcane Field Day
American Legion Hall, Franklin, LA

July 25 - 4:30 pm Iberia Parish Sugarcane Field Day
M.A. Patout & Sons, Patoutville, LA

July 26 - 2:00 pm St. Martin/Lafayette/St. Landry Parishes Sugarcane Field Day
Levert-St. John, St. Martinville, LA

American Society of Sugar Cane Technologists

Amelia Island Plantation, Amelia Island, Florida is the location for the 32nd Annual Joint Meeting of the Florida and Louisiana Divisions of the ASSCT. The dates for the meeting are June 26 - 28, 2002. From the program for the meeting it would appear that this will be another very informative two days of presentations. The ASSCT is officially sponsoring an exhibit. Beginning at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 26th, you are encouraged to visit all of the displays in the Exhibit Hall in the Amelia Inn Conference Center.

Further information about the meetings can be obtained by contacting Dr. Denver Loupe at the LSU phone number of 225-578-6930. Information can also be obtained from the ASSCT web site at www.assct.org . Information about accommodations, rates, and activities at Amelia Island Plantation can be obtained at their web site at www.aipfl.com .

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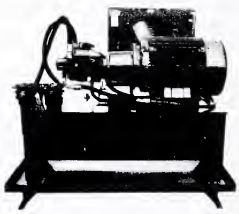

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ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

By James F. Coerver, P.E.
G.E.C., Inc.

"TMDL" UPDATE

The Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) program established under the Federal Clean Water Act has been a frequent subject of this column. It has been a frequent subject because of opposition by agricultural interests nationally, and local opposition enhanced by widespread publicity associated with a lawsuit filed in 1966 by Louisiana environmentalists in a Federal District court. The "TMDL" designation is a new name for an old and fundamentally flawed ESEPA initiative intended to cause stream water quality standards to be met by allocating (usually cutting back or eliminating) pollution sources sufficiently, on a stream by stream basis, so as to cause stream water quality standards to be met and maintained henceforth.

The program owes its origin to the environmental idealism and naive good intentions associated with the U.S. Clean Water Act of 1972. Congress was led to believe that water pollution could be eliminated in 10 years for an enormous but then manageable total Federal appropriation of about $100 billion. Most of that money was to go for grants to municipalities to build sewers and sewage treatment plants, much for research, and the rest for program administration and enforcement. It was assumed that industry would pay for its own clean-up, and little consideration was then given to urban and rural non-point and natural sources of pollution in the cost planning. An important part of the law was a requirement that water quality standards be established for every lake and stream, and that these standards be achieved by allocating waste discharge loads, if necessary. As the years passed, it became apparent that costs for all aspects of water pollution abatement were grossly underestimated, and after 30 years of spending many billions of Federal, state, and municipal tax dollars, and as much and probably much more private money on programs and facilities, the objective of *eliminating* water pollution is nowhere in sight. To be sure, stream water quality in the U.S. has been improved greatly since 1972, but quality standards have not been entirely achieved in many streams, mostly because the standards are unrealistic in the natural setting or the setting as altered by centuries of human residence and enterprise.

The TMDL program and its evolutionary predecessors are an epitome of the Federal-State water pollution control system. It started with good intentions and ample funding, accomplished a great deal of good, and in spite of enormous additional spending has been unable to achieve idealistic objectives which are now obviously unattainable. The program should have been killed or adjusted realistically years ago as Congress requested during the waning years of the Clinton Administration. Unfortunately, the departing Clinton-Browner EPA Administration defied Congress by promulgating last-minute rules that greatly expanded and complicated the then (and now) unpopular and controversial program. The incoming Bush administration put a temporary

hold on the program in order to estimate time and funding requirements, and subsequently estimated it would take an additional $4.3 billion annually for 15 years on this program alone in order to complete the work required by the rule, admitting that technological feasibility is not proven. After all, why not spend an additional $60 billion or so on a pipe dream that is so dear to the environmentalists?

While it is by no means certain that Congress will authorize such exorbitant future expenditures, the TMDL program is in place and it is possible that attempts will be made to impose waste load allocations in the absence of inadequate technical data to justify the action. It is with such mischief in mind that Louisiana environmentalists filed the 1998 lawsuit against EPA alleging that EPA failed to establish Louisiana TMDLs in a timely manner. Actually, TMDLs had not been established anywhere at the time because the necessary preliminary work had not been done and the job cannot be completed nationwide before 2017 even if the $ billions needed for the work is made available.

The absurdity of the 1998 lawsuit was covered by the enthusiastic support of the Louisiana news media. The news-media eagerly repeated the lying accusation that Louisiana had not established the stream water quality standards mandated by the Clean Water Act whereas Louisiana has had these EPA approved standards in place since the 1979 deadline. Nevertheless, a gullible and perhaps thoroughly confused Federal Judge ordered, on October 1, 1999, that TMDLs be promulgated for the Mermentau-Teche-Vermillion Basin by December 31, 1999! Of course, this absurd ruling was promptly remanded, but the environmentalists persisted with their lawsuit. The case had been hanging, and it became obvious that EPA did not want to embarrass their environmentalist constituency by defending the absurd allegations in Court when, in the Baton Rouge *Advocate* of April 6, 2002, a front page article announced a settlement agreement whereby EPA "has agreed to establish pollution limits for Louisiana waters, beginning with the Calcasieu and Ouachita rivers basins this spring and across the state by 2011."

According to an EPA "Guidance" document for the TMDL program, one of the first things that must be done in a state is identifying all waterbodies that do not meet the already established water quality standards, as these are the only streams for which TMDLs must be prepared. The Calcasieu and Ouachita basins are among the few Louisiana streams where there is sufficient analytical data to make such a determination. The Federal Register of March 29, 2002 contains the EPA designation of non-compliant stream segments in both the Calcasieu and Ouachita basins. The bad news is that some streams in the Ouachita Basin are designated as non-compliant for suspended solids, turbidity, nitrogen, nutrients, "noxious aquatic plants," "organic enrichment - low DO," phosphorus, and/or pesticides. There will inevitably be some attempt to blame this all on farmers and let Mother Nature and the effects of centuries of human residence and activities go Scott Free.

Curiously, the Federal Register notice of March 29 also says that 98 TMDLs for the Ouachita Basin have already been calculated by EPA (but not published), and that comments on them are invited. Federal Register notices usually require weeks of "lead time" before publication, and it is mighty strange that all this occurred weeks before the "settlement"was announced on April 6. This strange circumstance and unprecedented rush to establish TMDLs without the extensive technical data essential to establish fair and equitable waste load allocations is questionable, and of course should be challenged by litigation if necessary to prevent unfair and unnecessary restrictions on local agriculture.

In summary, the sugar cane industry needs to keep a close eye on TMDL program developments. Hopefully, Congress will "pull the plug" on such wasteful expenditures. Actually, a lot more stream quality improvement could be obtained if the money was spent funding structures and land treatment to accommodate agricultural best management practices for controlling water pollution.

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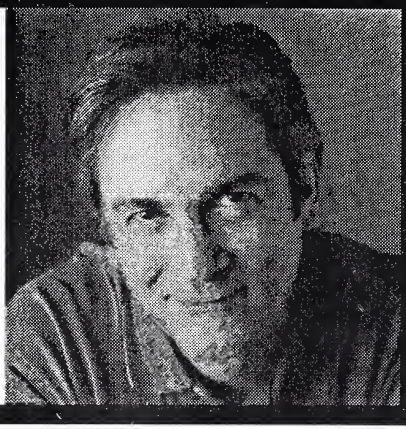

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Chris Mattingly, (right) presents Science Fair Awards to Senior Division winners Rachel Landry, left, Dr. Donald Voorhies of Catholic High School of New Iberia, and Quin Allain,

Chris Mattingly, (right) presents a Science Fair Award to winner Angelle Waguespack for the Junior Division. St. Mary's Nativity School also received an award.

THE BATON ROUGE LINE

By Tom Spradley
Spradley and Spradley

Legislature in Session - Insurance Commissioner Appeals Who's on First?

They're off and running... Well maybe not running but they are in session. The Louisiana Legislature meets in even numbered years to consider the budget, taxes and fiscal related matters only. This type of session usually results in a slower paced event than a regular "anything goes" session.

While not much seems to be happening on the surface all heck is breaking out over conflicting plans for taxes and the budget. Louisiana has about $600 million of taxes on the books which are officially described as "temporary" and the Governor wants to drop the "temporary" farce since they keep getting renewed and have been on the books for over a decade. Foster wants to make them permanent and then reduce most of them to zero over a period of ten years. The tax reductions would be automatic if revenue growth hits a "trigger" amount of two or three percent. LABI, the leading business lobby says they have a better plan.

LABI wants to eliminate a portion of the corporate franchise tax (the portion assessed against borrowed capital) and to repeal the sales tax on machinery and equipment. They say these taxes are the main hindrance to economic development. Their plan also phases these taxes out over a period of years.

Foster and LABI disagree – strongly!

The legislators on the other hand are struggling to find SOMETHING upon which everyone agrees. Not everyone, for instance, agrees that the temporary nature of the taxes in question is a bad idea. Some feel that the only thing they have to bargain with is the temporary taxes and their willingness to vote for them every two years. This is not good government in the classic sense but it does give an individual legislator something the governor wants; a vote. And since it technically is not an increase, just a renewal, legislators feel they can vote for the renewal and stand the heat back home come election time.

There are lots of versions of these repeal, renewal, and phase-out plans and as we got to press there is no clear indication of how it will all come out. But it will be interesting to watch. The budget is being held up in committee while the administration counts noses, samples ideas and twists arms on it's version of the tax plan. Legislative leaders are beginning to move their own versions through the process and somewhere down the line a compromise will be reached.

Insurance Commissioner Appeals

Insurance Commissioner Jim Brown, convicted of lying under oath, has made his plea for a new trial before a three judge appellate panel. It could take weeks for the panel to rule but courtroom observers seem to agree that he

has a chance to have the conviction set aside and a new trial ordered. Based on questions asked and the tenor of at least two of the three judges queries there is some optimistic speculation in Brown's camp that he will be given a new trial.

Who's on First?

Another major pastime in Baton Rouge is speculation over who is running for what. Finding a potential candidate to gossip about is easy - Baton Rouge is a "target rich environment" and there are plenty of races to consider.

Rep. Cooksey is running against Senator Mary Landrieu but he hasn't made a big move yet in the polls and the national Republicans are looking everywhere to find a candidate who can win a Senate race so they can regain control of the Senate. Enter State Representative Tony Perkins and Elections Commissioner Suzie Terrell. Each of them is flattered by the attention of the National Party but Mary Landrieu's numbers (a recent poll shows she has 62%) are daunting.

Next, the Governor's race. Things are changing, like who likes whom and who is backing whom but the number of people feeling out the possibility of being a candidate is not changing. It is too early to get out of a race that actually hasn't even started but a few of the rumored candidates are cooling their heels while others are gearing up. Polls are probably meaningless at this point except to the people who are using them to raise money and there are plenty of polls and plenty of fund raisers. Of recent interest is the talk of former State Representative and former Congressman Buddy Leach running for Governor. It is speculated that he may be willing to put up LARGE personal dollars ala Mike Foster.

Another popular debate is... can a Black candidate win and if not how can the Democrats keep one out of the race (?) which conventional wisdom says guarantees a right-leaning Republican victory.

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MILLING AROUND

By Dr. Peter Rein
Audubon Sugar Institute
Louisiana State University AgCenter

SIT Conference
ASSCT Processing Scholarship

Dr. Michael Saska Receives SIT Crystal Award. At the recent Sugar Industries Technologists (SIT) Annual Conference at Delray Beach, Florida, Dr. Michael Saska, professor at Audubon Sugar Institute, was awarded the prestigious SIT Crystal Award, also known as the SIT Achievement Award. The award is made annually to a technologist from anywhere in the world who has made a significant contribution to advancing the technology of the international sugar industry. In Michael's case, the award recognizes a consistent and high quality contribution over many years, and is due recognition for his productive research career in sugar.

Highlights of the Conference. Dr. Steve Clarke of Florida Crystals presided over proceedings as President of SIT. Florida Crystals and US Sugar hosted the conference jointly, and both companies opened their refineries at Okeelanta and Clewiston to the delegates for a visit on the day following the two days of technical presentations.

About 150 delegates attended the conference from 24 countries. Luis Fernandez, Chairman of the Board of Domino Foods, gave a clear and comprehensive analysis of the US Sugar Industry in his opening address.

SIT is predominantly oriented towards sugar refining. Papers covered a wide range of topics, including a new on-line instrument for measuring sucrose content, carbonatation, sugar cooling and drying, and automation. Two symposia were held, on the subjects of the Environment, and HACCP/GMP/Sanitation.

The technical program was good, and was boosted by the contributions made by delegates from the former Tate & Lyle/Domino Sugar refineries, now the American Sugar Refining Co. In the days of Tate & Lyle ownership, Domino refineries were precluded from participating. It is gratifying to see that the new owners have reversed this policy, to the benefit I am sure not only of SIT but also of the refineries concerned. Contributions from the American Sugar Refining Co. included a description of the development of pan boiling control at the Yonkers refinery and a very interesting contribution on the use of a barge to transport fine liquor from the Baltimore to the Brooklyn refineries.

Apart from Michael Saska's award, Mary An Godshall received the prize for the best paper presented at last year's conference. Taken together with the fact that Chairman Steve Clarke was formerly at Audubon Sugar Institute, Louisiana has made a significant contribution to SIT.

ASSCT Processing Scholarship

The first award of the ASSCT Undergraduate Sugar Processing Scholarship has been made to John Daigle. John already has a degree in Biology, and will resume his studies at LSU aimed at a degree in Biological Engineering with a minor in Sugar Engineering. John is the son of Lula mill manager C. J. Daigle, and will start his studies in the summer semester.

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A Report on the 2001 Outfield Variety Tests

Herman L. Waguespack, Jr. ASCL, Agronomist
Windell R. Jackson ASCL, Agronomist
Al J. Orgeron LAES, Research Associate
Donnie Garrison USDA-ARS, SRRC, Agronomist

This report has been written to inform the Louisiana sugarcane industry of the agronomic performance of varieties harvested in the outfield variety tests during 2001. Outfield variety tests are conducted during the final years of the 12-year multistage Louisiana sugarcane variety improvement program.

These tests are planted, harvested and evaluated cooperatively by the Agricultural Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, and the American Sugar Cane League.

In 2001, 29 outfield tests were mechanically harvested at nine locations throughout the sugarcane belt. These tests were on sugarcane farms with soils typical for that region. The planting and harvest date, as well as the soil type and region, for each outfield test location are presented in Table 1.

Yield data were obtained using combine harvesters provided by the growers at the test locations and a three ton, single-axle, high-dump weigh wagon equipped with electronic load cells. Each row of a plot was combine harvested and loaded into the weigh wagon. Plot weights were used to calculate cane yield, while 15 whole-stalk samples were cut from each plot for sugar yield. Additional reference information on the procedure used for data collection and preparation is given at the end of this report (1,2,4).

Variety yield data are reported in Table 2 for the light soil locations which includes seven plant-cane, six first-stubble, six second-stubble, three third-stubble tests and one fourth-stubble test. Table 3 reports variety yield data for two heavy soil locations in plant-cane, first-stubble and second-stubble. The tables include data for sugar per acre, tons of cane per acre, sugar per ton of cane, stalk weight and stalk population; however, only sugar per acre is discussed in the text.

The commercial variety used as a standard for comparison, LCP 85-384, is highlighted in the data tables. Since 1998, this variety has occupied more acreage than any other commercial variety in Louisiana. In 2001, this variety was planted on 78% of the sugarcane acreage (3). Varieties with statistically higher values than LCP 85-384 are indicated by a plus(+) and those with statistically lower values are indicated by a minus(-) next to each trait reported.

To adjust for missing data, the statistical analysis calculated least square means using the PROC MIXED procedure (SAS 8.01). Mean separation was accomplished using least square means probability differences, where a probability level of ≤ 0.05 was considered significant.

The most advanced experimental variety in the outfield, HoCP 96-540, was harvested in plant-cane and first-stubble tests in 2001. In 2001, HoCP 96-540 yielded significantly more sugar per acre than LCP 85-384 in plant-cane and first-stubble on light soils, but it was not significantly different from the standard variety on heavy soils. HoCP 96-540 is classified as resistant to smut and mosaic, moderately resistant to leaf scald and susceptible to the sugarcane borer. Based on harvest observations, this variety tends to be more erect than LCP 85-384 and even when lodged, appears to be well suited for combine harvest. Selected from a cross of LCP 86-454 x LCP 85-384, HoCP 96-540 has been advanced to secondary increase stations and could be eligible for release as a

commercial variety in 2003.

The other experimental varieties in the outfield , L 97-128, L 97-137, and HoCP 97-609 were harvested only in plant-cane in 2001. While L 97-128 yielded significantly more sugar per acre than LCP 85-384 on light and heavy soils, L 97-137 and HoCP 97-609 were not significantly different from LCP 85-384 on either light or heavy soil locations.

Of the commercial varieties, HoCP 85-845 yielded significantly lower than LCP 85-384 in plant-cane, first-stubble and second-stubble on light soils and CP 70-321 yielded significantly lower than the standard variety in first-stubble, second-stubble, third-stubble and fourth-stubble on light soils. The newest commercial variety, HoCP 91-555 was not significantly different from LCP 85-384 in yield of sugar per acre in any crop on light or heavy soils. Also, no commercial variety yielded significantly different from LCP 85-384 on heavy soils in any crop. Detailed yield comparisons are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Acknowledgments

Sincere appreciation is expressed to the growers who participate in the many different stages of the Louisiana sugarcane variety improvement program. The continued advancement of the Louisiana sugarcane industry is dependant upon the dedication and commitment of many individuals throughout the industry.

Table 1

Planting and harvest dates, soil types and regions, for nine outfield locations during 2001

Location	Crop Year							
	Plant-cane		First-stubble		Second-stubble		Third-stubble	
	Harvested 2001	Planted 2000	Harvested 2001	Planted 1999	Harvested 2001	Planted 1998	Harvested 2001	Planted 1997
Light Soil								
Alma [1]	12/14	08/30	**	**	**	**	**	**
Bon Secour [1]	12/03	08/24	12/03	09/13	10/24	09/25	**	09/15
Georgia [2]	11/08	09/19	11/08	08/24	11/08	10/21	**	09/25
Glenwood [2]	11/27	08/23	10/30	08/26	10/30	09/22	10/30	09/09
Lanaux [1]*	12/06	09/06	11/07	09/15	11/07	10/06	10/18	09/18
Levert-St.John [3]	12/04	09/01	11/01	08/18	11/01	09/29	**	09/05
R.Hebert [3]	12/05	09/05	11/30	08/25	10/16	09/24	11/30	09/16
Heavy Soil								
Allain [3]	10/25	09/27	10/25	09/14	10/25	10/01	**	09/12
Magnolia [2]	10/26	10/04	10/23	08/23	10/23	10/02	**	09/23

* Lanaux 4th stubble test harvested on 10/18/01 (planted on 10/01/96).

** No test harvested at this location.

[1] Mississippi River Area
[2] Bayou Lafourche Area
[3] Bayou Teche Area

Table 2.

Combined analysis of outfield tests on light soil locations during 2001

Variety	Sugar/A	Tons/A	Sugar/T	St. Wt.	Population
Plant-cane crop at seven locations					
CP 70-321	7891	29.4	268	2.49 +	23903 -
LCP 85-384	**8329**	**30.7**	**272**	**2.18**	**28602**
HoCP 85-845	7613 -	30.4	251 -	2.51 +	24168 -
HoCP 91-555	8094	30.3	267	2.12	28935
HoCP 96-540	9940 +	36.6 +	272	2.68 +	27404
L 97-128	10044 +	36.2 +	277	2.90 +	25311 -
L 97-137	8320	33.2 +	252 -	2.20	31323
HoCP 97-609	8424	31.0	271	2.50 +	25119 -
First-stubble crop at six locations					
CP 70-321	7146 -	26.8 -	266	2.58 +	20888 -
LCP 85-384	**8841**	**33.0**	**267**	**1.87**	**35976**
HoCP 85-845	7228 -	27.9 -	258 -	2.14 +	26238 -
HoCP 91-555	8139	29.5 -	276 +	1.83	32644 -
HoCP 96-540	9384 +	36.3 +	258 -	2.35 +	31297 -
Second-stubble crop at six locations					
CP 70-321	6756 -	27.8 -	243	2.33 +	24377 -
LCP 85-384	**8841**	**32.9**	**250**	**1.85**	**36139**
HoCP 85-845	7326 -	28.6 -	256	2.00	29028 -
HoCP 91-555	8187	29.6 -	277 +	1.71	35188
Third-stubble crop at three locations					
CP 70-321	4573 -	17.9 -	254	2.18 +	16331 -
LCP 85-384	**7738**	**29.6**	**259**	**1.65**	**36410**
HoCP 85-845	7384	28.0	264	1.91 +	29284
HoCP 91-555	6794	24.5	274 +	1.62	30727
Fourth-stubble crop at one location					
CP 70-321	5680 -	24.3 -	233	2.13	22971 -
CP 72-370	4461 -	18.1 -	248 +	1.77	20534 -
CP 79-318	7085	30.1 -	235	1.98	30981 -
LCP 82-089	6203 -	27.6 -	224	1.81	30720 -
LHo 83-153	5318 -	25.9 -	205	1.75	29829 -
LCP 85-384	**7430**	**33.7**	**221**	**1.80**	**38085**
HoCP 85-845	7290	32.0	228	2.06	31137
HoCP 91-555	8060	30.7	264 +	1.77	34766

(+) or (-) denotes yields which are statistically higher or lower than LCP 85-384.

Table 3.

Combined analysis of outfield tests on heavy soil locations during 2001

Variety	Sugar/A	Tons/A	Sugar/T	St. Wt.	Population
Plant-cane crop at two locations					
CP 70-321	5342	21.1 -	253 +	2.29	18698 -
LCP 85-384	**5955**	**26.0**	**228**	**2.04**	**25541**
HoCP 85-845	5598	23.0 -	243	2.39	19395 -
HoCP 91-555	6359	26.5	240	2.19	24360
HoCP 96-540	6308	26.7	236	2.65 +	20157 -
L 97-128	6886 +	26.1	264 +	2.65 +	19956 -
L 97-137	6165	25.6	240	2.32	22141 -
HoCP 97-609	5736	24.0	239	2.46 +	19649 -
First-stubble crop at two locations					
CP 70-321	3873	15.0 -	258	1.71	17797 -
LCP 85-384	**4823**	**18.0**	**269**	**1.66**	**21989**
HoCP 85-845	4631	17.9	258	1.81	19819
HoCP 91-555	5628	20.1	280	1.51	27109 +
HoCP 96-540	5749	21.9 +	263	1.72	25592
Second-stubble crop at two locations					
CP 70-321	4157	16.4	257 -	1.95 +	16683 -
LCP 85-384	**4982**	**18.3**	**283**	**1.47**	**24603**
HoCP 85-845	4231	15.7	269	1.61	19746
HoCP 91-555	5000	17.6	291	1.42	24688

(+) or (-) denotes yields which are statistically higher or lower than LCP 85-384.

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Monitoring Mosaic

by Mike Grisham and Yong-Bao Pan
USDA, ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit

In April's Sugar Bulletin, reasons as to why diseases can threaten a sugarcane industry when a single variety dominates that industry as does LCP 85-384 in Louisiana were discussed (Hoy, 2002). Of concern is the threat can come from new diseases being introduced into an industry or from pathogens of diseases already present in the industry that can overcome varietal resistance. Mosaic, caused by a virus, was one of the examples where the pathogen has changed in the past. In this article, we will discuss changes to mosaic that have been observed in Louisiana in the past, some recent observations that suggest changes are still occurring, and what we are doing to monitor these changes.

In the early part of the 20th Century, mosaic in combination with soilborne diseases caused a near collapse of the Louisiana sugarcane industry. The varieties grown at that time were noble canes that were highly susceptible to mosaic. To control mosaic, P.O.J. varieties from Java that were tolerant to the virus were introduced in 1922 and 1923 by federal researchers to Louisiana. The varieties were hybrids developed from crosses between different species of sugarcane, primarily *Saccharum officinarum*, often called noble canes, and *S. spontaneum*, that are wild, grassy-appearing canes.

As sugarcane breeders and pathologists sought varieties that were resistant to mosaic, they discovered that the ability to cause mosaic varied with strains of the virus. For example, strain B of the virus could attack varieties that were resistant to strain A. The reactions of a set of sugarcane and sweet sorghum varieties, known as host differential varieties, were used to distinguish the different strains. To date, letters A through M have been assigned to different strains of virus causing mosaic. Fortunately, only a few of the strains became dominant and caused major problems for the Louisiana sugarcane industry.

The appearance and dominance of strains can often be associated with the varieties being grown in the industry. The original infection of the noble canes is believed to have been caused by strain E. Strain D appeared with the introduction of the more resistance P.O.J. varieties in the mid 1920s. Strains B and D were common between 1930 and 1950 when Co 281 and Co 290 were grown, with strain D becoming dominant after Co 281 was no longer grown. Brief, isolated outbreaks of strain A occurred during the 1940s and 1950s.

Strain H has been predominant since its discovery in 1956. Strain I and M were identified in 1966 and 1973, respectively. In surveys of strains causing mosaic conducted between 1978 and 1992, the highest levels of strain I (12-31%) were found in the Bayou Teche area between 1978 and 1982, corresponding to the area of the state where NCo 310 was most widely grown and the years when its acreage was the highest.

Only strains H, I, and M have been recovered from fields in Louisiana since 1978. This is an interesting observation because recent molecular studies have shown that strains H, I, and M are sufficiently different from the earlier strains that cause sugarcane mosaic to be classified as a new virus. The older strains still bear the name sugarcane mosaic virus (SCMV), while the virus containing strains H, I, and M was named sorghum mosaic virus (SrMV). The two viruses, SCMV and SrMV, are closely related and cause the same types of symptoms.

The mosaic strain surveys were discontinued in 1995 for three reasons: one, the

results of the surveys had not changed significantly for 10 years; two, the cost in labor and the time required for identifying strains with host differentials were high; and three, the pathology effort was needed to address leaf scald which was first observed in the fall of 1992.

To address the limitations of using host differential to identify strains, Yang and Mirkov (1997) developed molecular tests that can be conducted in a laboratory to identify different strains of the virus. The two-step process includes reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) and restriction fragment length polymorphisms (RFLP) protocols. RT-PCR is used to determine if the virus causing the mosaic is SCMV or SrMV; and the RFLP is used to distinguish strains within each virus. Although the tests require greater technical expertise and the expendable chemicals are more expensive, the time needed for a positive identification is reduced from 6-8 weeks to a few days, the number of personnel needed is reduced from several to one technician, and the results are easier to interpret and more accurate.

Over the last few years, we have made observations that have suggested that changes may have occurred among the virus strains that cause mosaic. For example, varieties have appeared to become susceptible to mosaic in the outfield tests after years of testing and exposure to natural and artificial inoculations of the virus. Other observations include outbreaks of the disease in varieties described as resistant and the production of atypical symptoms including severe mosaic symptoms on the leaves and stunting of plants. With the ability to analyze samples with laboratory procedures, we initiated a mosaic survey in the summer of 2001. Leaf samples were collected from greenhouse plants infected with strains A, B, and D of SCMV and strains H, I, and M of SrMV and from infected field-grown plants from multiple locations. Samples were processed according to the procedures of Yang and Mirkov. The results of samples from plants infected with previously identified strains confirmed the strain identification.

Unexpected results, however, were obtained from the field samples collected in the 2001 survey. Approximately 65% of the leaf samples were infected with strain I, a percentage much higher than expected; and approximately 21% were infected with strain H, a percentage much lower than expected. No samples were shown to be infected with strain M or any strain of SCMV. Between 1990 and 1995, less than 10% of the samples collected during industry-wide surveys were infected with strain I, while strain H was found in more than 90% of the samples. These results suggest that we need to reevaluate varieties for mosaic resistance, especially those being used as parents in commercial crosses. In the early stages of the breeding program, clones are eliminated if they become naturally infected. Varieties selected for evaluation in the outfield tests are artificially inoculated, primarily with strain H, to confirm their resistance to mosaic before release. We may need to use a mixture of strains when we screen our germplasm for resistance to mosaic.

The remaining 14% of samples from the 2001 survey were infected with a virus that did not match any of the known strains identified with this diagnostic protocol. According to the RT-PCR test the virus is SrMV, but the RFLP results indicate the strain or strains are not H, I, or M. As suggested earlier (Hoy, 2002), new pathogen types or strains may arise in one of two ways. One way is that an individual already exists in a pathogen population that has the capability to overcome the resistance of a variety. If that variety is widely planted, the pathogen has a competitive reproductive advantage over other members of the population. The second way a new strain arises is by mutation. We do not have enough information about these new strains at this time to suggest how they arose.

We do not know if these strains have the potential to cause serious problems for the Louisiana sugarcane industry. In the 2001 survey, we did not find any plants of LCP85-384 with mosaic symptoms, although we have observed occasional infected plants of this variety. Pathogenicity tests will be conducted in 2002. We have initiated a survey this year that will include a larger number of samples from a wider geographical area. We would appreciate being notified of any observations of mosaic in

varieties that are described as resistant to mosaic or observations of atypical mosaic symptoms.

In summary, we have shown that there has been a shift in which strain of SrMV is predominant, at least among the samples collected in 2001. These results suggest we should use a mixture of strains to screen our germplasm for resistance to mosaic, especially the parental varieties used in both the basic and commercial breeding programs.

Although the strain or strains of SrMV recovered in the 2001 survey have not been shown to be a risk to Louisiana sugarcane, the potential for the virus to produce new strains was demonstrated. This ability to produce new genetic types or strains also points out the potential vulnerability of an industry that is depending on one variety should a new strain arise that has the ability to overcome the resistance of that variety. Because of the extensive planting of LCP 85-384, the selective pressure is on the virus to produce a new strain that can overcome the resistance in the variety. A goal of our breeding program is to incorporate genetic resistance to mosaic and other diseases that are broad based enough to resist new strains or genetic types and to eventually eliminate the pathogen. This appears to be what happened to SCMV; however, a new virus, SrMV, emerged to take its place. It is important for us to continue to monitor the strains of mosaic and their potential to infect released varieties and candidate varieties.

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Don't forget

Farm Bill Meetings June 19 and 20, 2002

See Page 6 for times and places

Field Days Schedule

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Annual Contact Committee Meeting

July 11, 2002, Thibodaux, LA

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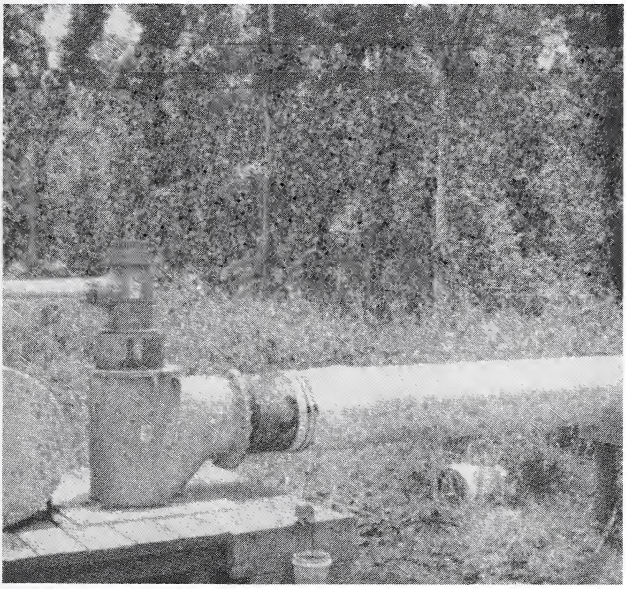

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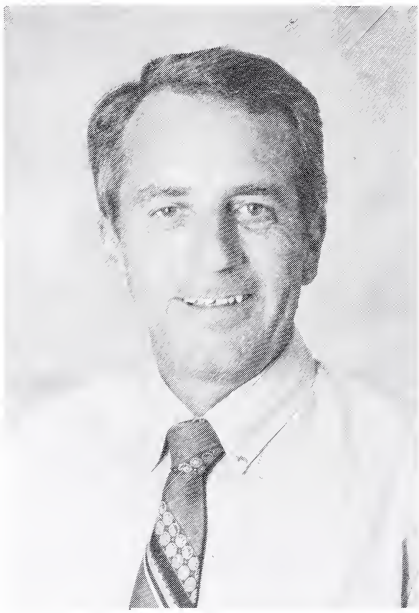

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Farm Bill Meetings

As the majority of you are keenly aware, the League had originally scheduled meetings around the sugar belt to inform growers and processors of the contents of the new sugar title in the 2002 Farm Bill, now "affectionately" known as the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

As the date grew nearer to the proposed dates of June 19 and 20, it became more evident to the leadership of the League that there were many questions that could not, or may not be answered until the actual rules and regulations are published by USDA. With that being said, it was felt that the meetings might actually confuse or frustrate people in the industry if answers to at least the majority of the questions that might be posed couldn't be answered. The reason for this feeling that most of the "what if" questions that are being posed are presently being answered by the response that we are waiting to see how the department proposes to address many of the "what if" situations. That being the case, it was ultimately decided that to engage the industry without an ability to provide some, if not all, succinct answers might not be the wise thing to do. Therefore, as soon as the League feels that the proper information is available, we will move forward with setting up meetings to bring that information to you. The League will mail the information on the meeting dates, etc... directly to its members as soon as possible. Your leadership regrets the cancellation and appreciates your understanding.

It has been indicated to the League that the USDA is "shooting" for an approximate July 4th date for the publication of the preliminary release of the Department's rules and regulations. On that matter, we have seen many dates that were set by the department escape or moved forward. It is inherent on the USDA to attempt to get this information out in a timely manner, but the reality is that in their attempt to be thorough in what is drafted and then published, it then ends up taking the department a lot longer than they would like to promulgate these rules for all commodities and publish them in a timely manner.

Therefore, it is our genuine hope that we will be able to physically get the rules and regs, digest them, confer with USDA and then get out to you in the industry before August. And, even then, August, in our mind, is late.

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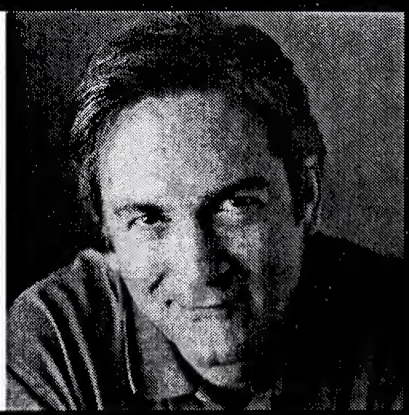

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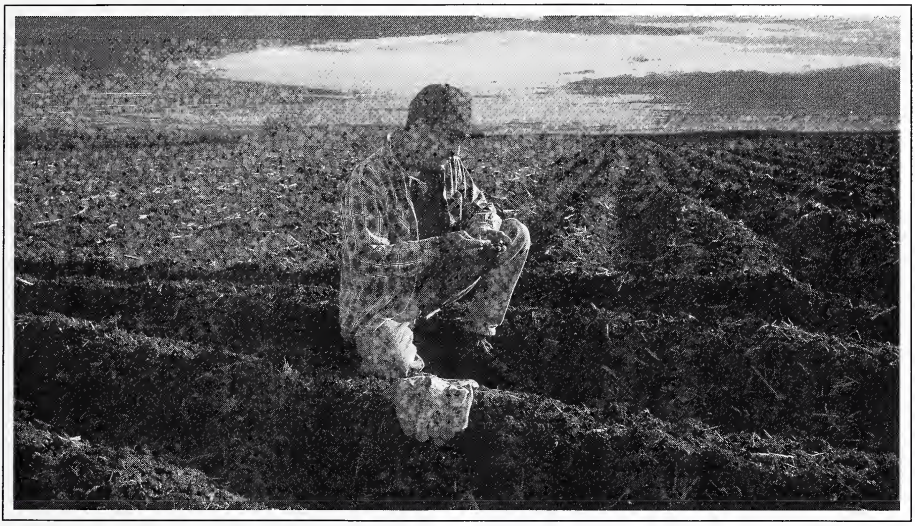

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Implementation Begins
Appropriations Could Be Farm Bill II
Mexico Task Force Meets With Mexican Officials
TPA Battle Moving To Conference
USDA WASDE June Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

USDA staff are hard at work writing implementing regulations for the new farm policy approved in May. Though little new information is currently moving out to the farmers or Farm Service Agency personnel, we understand that the draft regulations governing commodity programs are nearing completion and could be released at any time. It will be important for all sectors of the industry to review and comment on any regulations affecting the sugar industry.

Appropriations Could Be Farm Bill II

The appropriations process is beginning to heat up, with the agricultural appropriators expecting to receive budget numbers at any time. Agricultural groups met in early June to discuss strategies for dealing with the expected attempts to amend the appropriations bills with anti-farmer amendments. While we have come to expect such amendments regarding the sugar program, other major commodity groups are now anticipating several amendments addressing payment limits, means tests, three-entities and generic certificates.

Mexico Task Force Meets With Mexican Officials

The Mexican Task Force went on a fact finding mission to Mexico City in mid-June and met with governmental and industry officials to discuss the issues surrounding the bilateral sweetener dispute. Jackie Theriot, a member of the task force, participated in those meetings and reported that the tone of the meetings was cordial and productive. From those discussions, it appears that the Mexican industry is interested in negotiating an agreement to resolve the dispute, perhaps as early as autumn of this year. The task force will continue to seek resolution of the host of issues plaguing US-Mexico trade in sweeteners.

TPA Battle Moving To Conference

At the time of this writing, the House continues to delay sending its package of trade legislation to the House floor for consideration. For days, the House leadership has been poised to name trade promotion authority (TPA) conferees and move to the negotiating table with the Senate, but concerns over holding together the slim majority of House Members in favor of TPA have resulted in one missed opportunity after another. The original goal to have the trade conference completed by July 4 may be in jeopardy due to the delay in naming House conferees, but both sides still hope to move quickly to complete negotiations.

The anti-circumvention language crafted by Senator John Breaux (D-LA) is a part of the Senate's TPA/TAA package and the sugar industry will be following the conference closely to ensure that the language is a part of the final trade package. Senator Breaux in mid-June wrote an op-ed article in "The Hill," a weekly political newspaper focusing on Capitol Hill, defending the anti-circumvention language from distorted and misinformed attacks by opponents. The Senator's defense was eloquent and forceful.

USDA WASDE June Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its June World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use.

Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2002/03 is unchanged at 8,750,000 short tons. 2001/02 production was unchanged from May at 8,017,000 tons. Cane sugar production for 2002/03 is unchanged at 4,250,000 tons, while 2001/02 production is at 4,017,000 tons. Beet sugar production is projected at 4,500,000 tons for 2002/03, unchanged from last month and still 500,000 over 2001/02. For 2001/02 non-program imports are unchanged at 90,000 and 2002/03 non-program imports are unchanged at 60,000. Th 2002/03 tariff rate quota has not been announce 2001/02 cane sugar production in Louisiana unchanged at 1,575,000 short tons, while 2002/0 production is also unchanged at 1,700,000. Fo 2001/02, a minor change in cane sugar productio results in a year-ending stocks-to-use ratio of 16. percent, up from 16 percent last month. Stocks hel by the Commodity Credit Corporation ar unchanged at 1,630,000 short tons.

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ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Rain - Sugarcane Borer Deadheart Surveys

Up to the writing of this article on June 15th, only a few scattered pockets of rust have been reported. For this crop, it was expected by the pathologist from LSU and the USDA that the number of fields and the severity of rust would be greatly diminished for the spring and early summer. Rust does not over winter on the dead leaves of sugarcane. When there are a series of freezes such as occurred this past winter the source of spores for infection is extremely low and needs time to reestablish itself or to be brought in from a foreign source.

It would appear that the entire cane belt has received a great amount of rain during the previous two weeks. Many areas of the belt are reporting 5 inches of rain during this period. However, there are scattered areas that have received only a little or no rain within the last two months. The cane in these areas is showing signs of the lack of water. According to League agronomist, Herman Waguespack, "in the areas which have not received sufficient rain the cane is **not now just starting** to show symptoms of drought stress. In some of the fields, mostly in heavy soils, that I observed, the bottom leaves have turned brown and the tips of the upper leaves are starting to brown also. There are other fields, which are not nearly as severe, but LCP 85-384 does not have a good thrifty appearance. There are many yellow or light colored spots in these fields." At this time Herman could not give the percentage of the number of fields that he observed which were in severe need of water.

The other side of the coin is there are areas of the cane belt that are receiving rain showers every other afternoon. This does not seem as if it would be a problem, but researchers and crop consultants are reporting extremely high numbers of deadhearts. Deadhearts are a fairly good indication of the potential for pending borer problems. With the mild winters of the past five years or so the entomologist were expecting a large explosion in the numbers of borers found in fields. However, the hot dry days of late spring and early summer did not allow the population of the borers to build and the industry was saved from the additional expenses of multiple applications of insecticides on the majority of its acreage. Dr. Gene Reagen, LSU AgCenter entomologists provided the following informative paragraph.

Sugarcane Borer Deadheart Surveys *by T.E. Reagan, Dale Pollet, and Fred Posey--Dept. of Entomology LSU AgCenter, W.H. White--USDA-ARS Sugarcane Station, Houma, LA*

LSU AgCenter and USDA entomologists work together conducting surveys of sugarcane borer killed deadhearts each Spring (approximately 100 fields surveyed each year). Counting and dissecting deadhearts provides an estimate of the surviving borer larvae of the first generation coming out of the winter. We also take the larvae collected back to the laboratory and allow them to complete development on artificial diet to obtain percent parasitism. Depending on the relative amount of rainfall in a particular area, deadheart numbers can sometimes be a useful predictor of the severity of summer infestations. The industry-wide sugarcane borer deadheart average of 1087 per acre in 2002 is among the highest observed in the last 30 years. Therefore, in the areas that have an abnormally wet spring and wet early summer, sugarcane borer infestations can be expected to be above normal.

Average sugarcane borer deadheart counts since 1980.

Time Period	*1980s*	*1990-1995*	*1996-2001*	*2002*
# Deadhearts per Acre	*582*	*325*	*523*	*1087*

One of the biggest flaws with LCP 85-384 is its borer susceptibility. This problem was known at the time the variety was up for release. Many questions were asked about the ability of the industry to succeed with a variety that was so susceptible to infection by the cane borer. At that time, because of its small barrel size, poor harvestability and borer problems, it was estimated LCP 85-384 would never occupy more than 10 to 15 percent of the state's total acreage. Therefore, it was believed that the borer problem would remain under control. Further test results have indicated that when a borer damages LCP 85-384 the damage causes more yield losses than with other varieties.

If the rain continues and if the borer population explodes and becomes a state wide problem, there could be a serious shortage of aerial applicators. For several reasons the number of crop dusters which service the cane growing region has decreased drastically over the last few years. One of the major reasons that caused the decrease in their numbers has been the lack of work or the lack of borer problems. This lack of borer problems is good for the cane grower, but not for the aerial applicator. In addition, there have been accidents in which both planes and pilots were lost and neither was replaced. When you are given a map by your crop consultant for fields which require an application of insecticides, do not hesitate to bring it to your aerial applicator. If he gets too many jobs at one time, he may not be able to complete them in a timely manner.

After last month's bulletin in which the results of the 2001 outfield tests were reported, many growers are asking questions about the variety HoCP 96-540. The Variety is on the secondary stations at this time and could be released to the industry next year. The secondary stations got off to somewhat of a slow start, because most secondary stations stretched their seed by planning at a rate of one stalk with a very small overlap. However, with the outstanding suckering conditions this spring stands filled out very well. Overall, the stands on secondary stations look very promising and should give a very good increase of the new variety.

The other variety, which also looked promising in plant cane out field tests, is starting to show smut. Infected stools of the variety can be found both in the outfield tests and on the League's primary stations. L 97-128 is a variety that yielded very well in plant cane tests during the 2001 harvest. This is a variety that has very early vigor and jumps out ahead of everything else in the field. The variety is also very erect and harvests quite well. L 97-128 is on the primary stations and if smut does not kill it (too much smut found in test plots and primary increase stations); it should go to the secondary stations this fall. L 97-128 would be up for release in the fall of 2004.

Growers are urged to check with their Farm Service Agent to make sure that all of their farm records are correct and up to date. Your farm records will be very important and are needed under the new Farm Bill. Growers are also urged to attend their local Field Days. Most of the Field Days do not start until after July 10th. A complete list of dates and times can be found in last month's issue of the Sugar Bulletin.

This issue of the bulletin is the start of the publication of summaries for research done on projects, which were funded by the Dedicated Research Committee and were conducted in 2001. After reading the summaries, if there are any questions feel free to ask them of the League's staff. If we do not know the answers, we will certainly contact researchers and get the answers for you.

Dedicated Research Funding Summaries

Scientists who receive funding from the League's Dedicated Research Committee are requested to prepare a short summary of their work at the end of the year. Those reports will be published each month until all of them have been printed. The following are reports during the year 2001.

ROUTINE FINAL MOLASSES ANALYSES FOR LOUISIANA MILLS By Brian White, Audubon Sugar Institute

For the past two seasons, ASI has analyzed weekly molasses samples from Louisiana mills, using HPLC methods for sucrose and monosaccharides. Purities have been compared with the South African target purity equation predictions. The target purity differences generated provide the mills with the best and most reliable measure of the efficiency of their molasses exhaustion.

The total solids in the molasses were measured by vacuum oven drying, and a new relationship between refractometric brix and total solids was developed. In addition, molasses samples were analyzed by NIR, and calibration equations developed. These calibrations are most satisfactory, with excellent standard errors. NIR will be used for future analysis of molasses in the coming season.

A limited number of opposite mixed juice samples were analyzed by HPLC. Surprisingly the pol/sucrose ratios of about 0.95 were registered, significantly lower than values of about 0.99 recorded in South Africa. The mixed juice analysis program will be extended considerably next season.

EVALUATION OF HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL CRYSTALLIZERS By Harold Birkett and Jeanie Stein, Audubon Sugar Institute

As part of a program to test and evaluate new types of equipment installed in the Louisiana sugar industry such as vertical crystallizers, continuous vacuum pans, short retention time clarifiers, etc. work was initiated on vertical crystallizers and on pans to a limited extent. There are currently three types of vertical crystallizers in operation in Louisiana, provided by Fletcher-Smith, Silver and Honiron. The horizontal types of crystallizer in use are predominantly the Blanchard type, although there are two Werkspoor rapid cooling crystallizers in service.

A Nutsch device fitted with a conventional low grade C centrifugal screen and operated on 100 psig plant air was used to obtain mother liquor samples from the massecuite at various stages in the process. In particular the mother liquor in the massecuite leaving the pan, after cooling in the crystallizers, and after reheating prior to centrifuging were analyzed for refractometric Brix and apparent purity. Samples of the final molasses leaving the factory centrifugals were also analyzed for refractometric Brix and apparent purity.

The temperature drop across the crystallizer varied from 29 to 51° F for factories with only Blanchard type crystallizers. The temperature drop for one factory employing only vertical crystallizers was 45° F. One factory utilizing a vertical crystallizer followed by a Werkspoor and using Blanchards for the final cooling had an average temperature drop of 52° F. Another factory using a vertical crystallizer followed by a line of Blanchards operating without cooling had an average temperature drop of 35° F. The temperature drop achieved in the crystallizers depends on the ambient temperature, use of cooling water, and retention time available rather than on any inherent differences in the crystallizer type.

The measured purity drop across the crystallizer station varied from 6 to 13 purity points. The purity drops achieved depended more on the degree of cooling achieved across the crystallizer station than on the type of crystallizer employed.

ORGANIC ACIDS AND SUGAR FACTORY CORROSION By Don Day, Audubon Sugar Institute

The rapid shift in Louisiana from whole stalk harvesting to billet harvesting has resulted in unanticipated alterations of traditional processing systems in the sugar factories. Increased organic acid loading has been found in the mixed juice. This can cause processing problems that may range from increased scale formation, increased lime usage, and higher sugar losses to more rapid equipment corrosion, and may well be a factor in some of the unusual processing problems reported in some Louisiana factories this past season.

Research focused on a mill that had a history of rapid corrosion of condensate return lines. Measurements were taken of organic acid levels and pH values across the sugar processing system. Particular attention was paid to volatile (acetic, formic) and non-volatile (lactic) acids of microbial origin. Early in the study it became apparent that a major source of the problem was related to the cane washing system. This mill has a recycle wash pond which cannot handle the BOD input. This meant that after a month of operation the cane was washed with water containing increasing levels of organic acids. Weather conditions during 2001 were such that it was possible to process the cane without washing. Cessation of washing brought an immediate improvement in operation and solved the corrosion problem in the condensate return lines that had been a problem.

EVAPORATOR CHEMICAL CLEANING By Willem Kampen, Audubon Sugar Institute

Cleaning tests were held at two factories (Teche and Lafourche areas) with EDTA in a 2% caustic solution. Based upon laboratory tests, water was added to obtain a 5% EDTA solution in the evaporator bodies and this was boiled at atmospheric pressure for 2 to 2.5 hours. Effects 1 through 3 were clean but in one case the fourth effect was not totally clean while in the other case it was still somewhat dirty. It turned out that in both cases the silicon levels were high, more so in the Teche area then in the Lafourche area.

At lower silicon levels (roughly 10% or less) the EDTA removes sufficient calcium and magnesium for the scale structure to disintegrate and be removed. At higher silicon levels that is not the case. EDTA at a pH value of at least 9 will remove 215 mg of calcium per gram of EDTA. Small amounts of ammonium bifluoride were subsequently added to the EDTA solution, so the final pH value did not go below 9 for the final cleaning of the falling film plate evaporator. After recirculating and boiling at atmospheric pressure for just over one hour, the plate pack and distributor were essentially clean. The cost of EDTA (39%) is around $ 0.35/lb and it is to be used at concentrations of ~ 5%. EDTA can be regenerated after use by lowering the pH with sulfuric acid to near 2, adding sufficient caustic soda to achieve a pH of 9 and possibly adding some fresh EDTA. It should be cost effective in comparison to caustic soda and HCl.

A new acid (HCl + rodine+ wetting agent) from Southern Chemical was tested on juice heaters and the same material cleaned three heaters well. In the evaporators it did not clean the fourth effect unless some ammonium bifluoride was added. Sodium acid sulfate has been tested in the laboratory. A 10% solution removed some 99% of fourth effect scale.

It seems that with some additional work both all three cleaning agents will work well in a short period of time. Compositions have to be fine-tuned to reduce the cost and make them similar or lower than the present caustic and acid boils.

EVAPORATOR SCALE FORMATION AND COMPOSITION By Willem Kampen, Audubon Sugar Institute

Tubes with scale were obtained from all four effects of a factory in the Teche area, from the fourth effect of another factory in the Teche area, and from the fourth effects of factories in the Lafourche and Mississippi River areas.

In the fourth effects an average of 16.4 grams scale per square foot of tube surface was measured. In all cases, the scale at the bottom of the tubes was thicker than at the middle and the top. Scale thickness of more than 2 mm in the fourth effects is considered to be too high.

Elemental scale analysis was done by ICP (Inductive Coupled Plasma). Organic matter levels in scale did not exceed 10.6% and moisture levels did not exceed 10.5%. Hence, inorganic salts make up over 82% of the scale. ICP analysis indicated that calcium levels in fourth effect scale (the most difficult to remove) were as high as 20.1% and silicon levels as high as 17.8%. It seems that scale from the Teche area contains more silicon (or silicates) than from other areas.

Calcium in scale is to a large extent a function of the pH of the limed juice. In order for the natural pH of the juice (~ 5.4) to rise, the organic acids present must first be neutralized. With dirty wash water additional acids are added to the expressed juice. Juices high in organic acids require more lime and this yields more dissolved calcium salts. Juices high in phosphates (and silicic acid) may generally be limed to pH ~ 7.6, while juices low in phosphate should not be limed much beyond ~7.2. Calcium phosphates, sulfate, aconitate, oxalate and citrate are all relatively insoluble and will increase scale formation.

(Continued on page 17)

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Prowl controls Seedling Johnsongrass:

- Stops the development of Rhizome Johnsongrass
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Prowl controls Itchgrass:

- Stopping the development of seed can eliminate Itchgrass from your sugarcane fields
- For best results, treat your fields with Prowl at planting, in the spring, and at layby

Johnsongrass control with Prowl herbicide

Untreated **Prowl + Sencor**

Photo taken with Pete Dufresne at Dufeco Planting Company. According to Pete "Prowl performs extremely well and is almost a must in your chemical program. It seems to be more effective than any chemical I have used, especially on johnsongrass!"

Todd Landry, Loreauville Harvesting
Loreauville, LA • February 14, 2002

Treated Billets **Untreated Check**

Prowl is safe to whole stalk or billet planted cane. Plant cane should be covered with 3 to 4 inches of packed soil at time of planting.

Plant cane field treated Sept. 2001 with 2 Qt/A Prowl + 1 lb/A Sencor, still clean Feb. 14, 2002!

For questions contact BASF:

Marc A. Grabert
(337) 367-0925

Clyde Bolton
Bolton Cane Company
Franklin, LA

Prowl + Atrazine banded. Seedling johnsongrass control. Looks good, but a broadcast application would look better! (Seedling johnsongrass turning into rhizome johnsongrass)

For questions contact BASF:

Jerry Jack Ford
(318) 445-8654

BASF Plant Cane Herbicide Recommendations: Broadcast Rate/Acre

TANK-MIX: A+B

A. Grass Base Herbicide for Sugarcane:

	PROWL
Browntop Panicum and annual grass	1.5 - 2 qt./acre
Seedling Johnsongrass	2 - 3 qt./acre
Itchgrass	3 - 3.6 qt./acre
Bermudagrass suppression	3.6 qt./acre

B. Broadleaf Herbicide:

Karmex DF — 3 - 3.6 lbs/acre (better annual grass, morningglory, and 10 - 20% better on seedling johnsongrass control than Atrazine)

OR

Atrazine — 4 - 8 pts./acre (10 - 20% better on winter broadleaf weeds than Karmex DF)

OR

Sencor — 1.0 lb./acre - 1.5 lb./acre (20% better Seedling Johnsongrass control than Atrazine, Helps suppress Bermudagrass, 10 - 20% better on winter broadleaf weeds than Karmex DF)

OR

Spartan — 6.7 oz. - 8 oz./acre (nutsedge)

OR

Sinbar — 1.33 lb./acre - 1.5 lb./acre (about the same ratings as Sencor but with possible crop injury, and helps suppress Bermudagrass)

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Dedicated Research Funding Summaries

EFFECT OF CLARIFICATION CONDITIONS ON COMPOSITION OF EVAPORATOR CONDENSATE AND NON-SUGAR ELIMINATION By Michael Saska, Audubon Sugar Institute

A series of laboratory milling - clarification – evaporation tests were done during the 2001 season to investigate the effects of clarification conditions on the composition of evaporator condensate and non-sugar elimination in clarification. Hot liming and soda ash clarifications were tested, and clarified juice pH varied from 5.0 (no pH adjustment) to around 8.0. Anion (lactate, acetate, formate, chloride, malate, sulfate, oxalate, phosphate, citrate and trans-aconitate), cation (Na, K, NH_4, Mg, Ca), Si and other parameters were determined in samples of raw juice, syrup and evaporator condensate.

pH of the condensate depends primarily on the relative concentrations of ammonia and acetic acid. Both are affected, in opposite direction, by pH in clarification, viz. ammonia concentration is increased due to a faster rate of glutamine deamination at higher pH, and acetic acid concentration is decreased because of reduced volatility of the acid at increasing pH. The tests indicate that poor pH control in clarification, with occasional dips below 6.3 or even 6.0, is primarily responsible for the acidic condensate reported at times by the mills. It is believed that even stale cane if properly limed, and pH maintained at some 6.5 or higher, should not produce acidic condensate and potential for corrosion in the vapor and condensate space of the evaporators. A question remaining, perhaps, is whether the glutamine levels (the source of ammonia) are lower in the new than in the older varieties, which might lead to generally lower condensate pH than observed in the past. Glutamine concentration will be considered in the 2002 program. The pH dependence of volatility of acetic acid was confirmed in tests in which pH of dilute solutions of glacial acetic acid (2 g/L) in 15 Brix sucrose solutions was adjusted with milk-of-lime and evaporated under vacuum. The acetic acid concentration determined by HPIC in the condensate at pH levels above 6.5 is very low and would be offset by ammonia in condensate from cane juice.

A significant increase in calcium during liming occurs. Increases of some 100 % at pH 6.6 and over 250 % at pH 7.5 were measured, while magnesium was unchanged. Trans-aconitate represents 30 to 60 % of all anions and is nearly unaffected in hot liming. Of the other major anions, sulfate levels are unchanged by liming as well, while oxalate and phosphate levels are reduced by about 60 – 70%, although the oxalate removal is not enhanced by pH rise in clarification. Silicon behavior is of great interest as silicon and calcium are found to be the major inorganic components of evaporator scale. The gravimetric analysis employed does not differentiate between insoluble silica and soluble silicates and the elimination rates that were found must include the elimination by settling of insoluble fine silica. Behavior of organic anions is complex, as both generation, decomposition and volatilization during clarification are likely.

The soda ash treatment produces syrups with much lower calcium levels than hot liming; reduced with respect to raw juice by some 10 – 30% compared to the 100 – 250 % increase in hot liming, although the turbidity elimination is inferior. There was some indication at the end of testing that dose and/or choice of the flocculant could bring the turbidity down to the levels seen in hot liming.

Only qualitative information could be obtained on the settling rates in the various treatments, but all were found high, with settling complete within 5 - 10 minutes. It is significant that no difference was found between the pH of clarified juice and pH of syrup. The high pH drop seen routinely in the factories must come from microbial effects in filtration and chemical degradation of sugars in industrial evaporators.

FALLING FILM PLATE EVAPORATOR TRIALS By Willem Kampen, Audubon Sugar Institute

A 10m^2 (131 ft^2) plate pack with feed distributor was donated by Balcke-Durr (Germany). The unit was installed in a 42" diameter by 22 ft high mild steel column and installed at the Raceland Raw Sugar Factory. The feed flow was designed for 12 gpm so as to be above the required wetting number [equivalent to 1.5 l/h cm] to assure proper operation and minimal fouling of the plate pack as no recirculation was used.

Only twice did the strainers in the feed line contain sizable quantities of bagacillo. Any accumulated dirt in the distributor was daily removed by opening the bypass valve for one minute, which emptied the distributor and allowed the feed to flow through the distributor to sweep away any loose dirt.

The feed was "clarified juice" which was from alternating intermediate and cold limed mixed juice. The feed brix varied considerably due to the fact that excess magma was returned to the clarified juice. During the first run, the unit was operated for 138 hours continuously. The feed flow rate varied continuously between 5 and 12 gpm, the feed temperature varied between 206° and 234°F, the exhaust steam temperature between 250° and 280°F, and the feed brix between 14.0 and 19.4. All these changes occurred continuously and independently of one another. Still, the falling film unit operated well. The evaporative load varied between 7.1 and 18.5 lb/hr ft^2. The liquid residence time at 12 gpm was only 8.3 seconds. The overall heat transfer coefficient was initially around 700 Btu/hr ft^2°F and was reduced after nearly six days to approximately 325.

During a factory evaporator cleaning stop the unit was cleaned by boilingwith an 8% caustic soda solution for one hour followed by a water wash. A check with a telescopic mirror and flash light indicated a nearly clean plate pack.

When feed was available again, the unit was started up and operated continuously for over seven days until the end of the grinding season. The evaporation rate, as a result of the unsteady conditions fluctuated between 3.8 and 24 lbs/hr ft^2. The overall heat transfer coefficients reduced in just over a week from well over 600 to approximately 425 Btu/hr ft^2 °F. The average feed brix was 17.1 and the discharge brix 22.3, hence it operated more like a second than a first effect.

Overall, the FFPE unit operated extremely well under difficult conditions. The evaporative load, at the same delta T, is higher than for Robert evaporators. The residence time is very short and this minimizes color formation confirmed by color measurements. Overall heat transfer coefficients in a clean unit will start at or near 700 Btu/hr ft°F and reduce to around 350 - 400 Btu/hr ft^2°F after more than a week of continuous operation. This is probably somewhat better under more steady conditions.

VACUUM PAN AUTOMATION By Peter Rein and Scott Barrow, Audubon Sugar Institute

A survey of pan automation was done last year in Louisiana and Florida sugar mills. Some mills in Florida are running very successful automatic pan systems, but no Louisiana mills run pans under fully automatic control. A large number of pans have instrumentation fitted, but in many cases it is inappropriate or obsolete.

The two Audubon Sugar Institute (ASI) lab pans have been automated using different systems. One of the pans has a number of different measuring transducers fitted, to establish which is the most appropriate measurement for different grades of boiling. The microwave density unit seems to be the best measurement device for high grade boilings, and conductivity is the most cost-effective for low grade boilings.

ASI has been involved in the specification of a fully automatic pan control system being installed at St. James. It is expected that the benefits of better quality, better pan exhaustion, reduced manpower and maximum use of installed pan capacity can be achieved.

BILLET PLANTING RESEARCH RESULTS FROM 2001

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LSU AgCenter
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American Sugar Cane League

There continues to be intense interest in billet planting in the Louisiana sugarcane industry. This paper reports on results obtained during 2001 from an on-going research project comparing billet and whole stalk planting. Yields were obtained from field experiments on commercial farms comparing billet and whole stalk plantings for two experiments in plant cane, one in first stubble, and one in second stubble. Results also were obtained from three plant cane and two first stubble experiments at the LSU AgCenter Sugar Research Station. The plant cane experiments at St. Gabriel evaluated the effects of date and rate of billet planting and compared various combinations of fungicides, antitranspirants (products that create a film-coating on the billets), and other chemical treatments in a dip-inoculation experiment. The two experiments in first stubble compared billet planting rate and billets and whole stalks with and without starter fertilizer and two rates of billet planting. In addition, an experiment was conducted to evaluate the effect of different settings on a Cameco chopper harvester on physical billet damage. All experiments during 2001 were conducted with LCP 85-384.

In the two plant cane experiments on farms, the results were similar to a trend observed in previous experiments with LCP 85-384, in which whole stalk planting provided a higher yield than billet planting in the plant cane crop. Stalk population and tonnage and sugar yields were significantly greater in whole stalk planted rows in only the experiment conducted in Ascension parish (Table 1). In this experiment, the application of 15-45-45 starter fertilizer did not increase yield (data not shown). Slightly higher yields were recorded in whole stalk planted rows in the experiment in St. Mary parish, but the differences were not significant. In another experiment conducted in Ascension parish, first stubble yields were reduced compared to plant cane, but the yields obtained from billet and whole stalk planted rows were similar (Table 2). In the experiment in second stubble, one billet treatment was lower and one was similar to whole stalk planting, and there was no benefit from initial treatments with fungicide, soil insecticide, or application of a film-coating to billets at planting (Table 3).

Table 1. Plant cane yields of LCP 85-384 for two experiments comparing billet and whole stalk planting on commercial farms.

	Stalks per acre (x1000)		Tons of cane per acre		Sugar per acre (lbs.)	
Planting	Ascension	St. Mary	Ascension	St. Mary	Ascension	St. Mary
Billet	47.6 b	49.3 a	34.4 b	33.1 a	7850 b	7142 a
Whole	50.6 a	52.3 a	41.9 a	35.1 a	9179 a	7535 a

Values within a column followed by the same letter are not significantly different at $P = 0.05$.

Table 2. Plant cane and first stubble yields of LCP 85-384 from an experiment in Ascension Parish comparing plantings of billets and whole stalks with and without fertilizer (15-45-45) applied at planting.

	Tons of cane per acre[x]		Sugar per acre (lbs.)[x]	
Treatment	2000	2001	2000	2001
Billet	41.5 ab	21.8 ab	8013 ab	5034 ab
Billet + Fertilizer	38.0 b	23.3 ab	7391 b	5398 ab
Whole stalk	38.4 b	19.2 b	7160 b	4352 b
Whole stalk + Fertilizer	45.4 a	24.0 a	8543 a	5726 a

[x] Values within a column followed by the same letter are not significantly different at $P = 0.05$.

Table 3. Yields of LCP 85-384 from an experiment in Iberia Parish comparing whole stalks, long billets, and short billets treated with Tilt, Thimet, an antitranspirant (film-coating), and Tilt plus antitranspirant.[x]

Treatment	Tons of cane per acre[y]			Sugar per acre (lbs.)[y]		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
Whole stalk	42.5 ab	35.8 a	24.6 a	9712 ab	6991 a	5400 a
Long billet	44.3 a	30.0 b	22.3 ab	10095 a	6115 ab	4453 b
Short billet	44.0 a	33.2 ab	23.8 ab	10299 a	6570 ab	5372 a
Short billet + Tilt	40.6 ab	31.4 b	23.5 ab	9362 ab	6462 ab	5301 ab
Short billet + Thimet	38.0 b	30.8 b	22.8 ab	8778 b	6100 ab	4827 ab
Short billet + Antitranspirant	40.9 ab	29.6 b	22.5 ab	9480 ab	5787 b	4705 ab
Short billet + Tilt + Antitranspirant	37.3 b	32.9 ab	21.2 b	8475 b	6801 a	4903 ab

[x] Tilt (Syngenta, Inc.) is propiconazole fungicide; Thimet (American Cyanamid, Inc.) is phorate, a soil applied insecticide; and the antitranspirant was Transfilm (PBI/Gordon, Inc.).
[y] Values within a column followed by the same letter are not significantly different at $P = 0.05$.

In experiments conducted at the Sugar Research Station, the date of billet planting affected stalk population and yield (Table 4), as did the rate of billet planting (Table 5). Five planting dates were compared. Favorable weather conditions allowed plantings to be established at two-week intervals extending over the planting season. The highest yields were obtained from the mid-season planting dates. Tonnage yields were highest for the 31 August and 18 September dates (Table 4). Increasing the rate of billet planting from one to 12 running billets resulted in progressively greater millable stalk populations (Table 5). There were two planting dates in the rate of planting experiment, and stands

were greater for the 22 August planting date compared to 18 September. As a result, more yield differences were detected among planting rates in the later planting. The lowest yield was obtained from plots planted with only one running billet at both planting dates. At the 18 September planting date, sugar per acre was greater with the six, nine, and 12 billet planting rates than for the three billet planting rate. Despite the higher stalk population obtained, there was no yield advantage from planting at the highest two rates. The rate of billet planting was examined in two additional experiments in first stubble. In a small scale experiment comparing four rates of billet planting, first stubble yields were similar for all planting rates (Table 6). In an experiment comparing whole stalk planting to billets planted at two rates with and without starter fertilizer, the higher yields due to whole stalk planting and addition of fertilizer detected in plant cane were no longer evident in first stubble (Table 7). Yields in all treatments were similar. A high rate of billet planting did not increase yield in either season. In the dip-inoculation experiment, four antitranspirants and two fungicides applied singly and in combinations along with two additional chemical treatments did not improve millable stalk population in plant cane (data not shown).

Table 4. Effect of date of planting on plant cane yield of billet planted LCP 85-384.

Date of planting	Stalks/acre (x1000)	Tons of cane per acre	Sugar per acre (lbs.)
August 3	48.3 d	43.3 b	8972 b
August 15	53.1 ab	44.5 b	9296 b
August 31	54.8 a	49.8 a	10402 a
September 18	51.3 bc	49.7 a	9607 ab
September 28	49.2 cd	45.0 b	9200 b

Values within a column followed by the same letter are not significantly different at $P = 0.05$.

Table 5. Effect of rate of planting on plant cane yield of LCP 85-384 planted on two dates.

	Stalks per acre (x1000)		Tons of cane per acre		Sugar per acre (lbs.)	
Rate	Aug. 22	Sept. 18	Aug. 22	Sept. 18	Aug. 22	Sept. 18
1 billet	50.6 c	40.8 d	56.1 b	46.9 b	9274 b	8018 c
3 billets	68.3 b	50.3 c	66.9 a	57.9 a	11898 a	9484 b
6 billets	74.4 ab	56.7 b	65.4 a	63.6 a	12122 a	10771 a
9 billets	76.6 a	57.9 b	65.2 a	58.3 a	11876 a	10057 ab
12 billets	75.6 a	66.0 a	66.7 a	62.5 a	11876 a	10159 ab

Planting rate is the number of billets running in the furrow. Billets were planted on 22 August and 18 September. Values within a column followed by the same letter are not significantly different at $P = 0.05$.

Table 6. Effect of billet planting rate on the first stubble yield of LCP 85-384 at the Sugar Research Station during 2001.

Planting rate	Cane yield	Stalk		Normal juice		Sugar yield
		No.	Wt.	Brix	Sucrose	
	T/A	1000/A	lbs.	%	%	lbs/A
3 Billets	53.9	53.7	2.00	16.2	13.4	10202
5 Billets	52.9	57.3	2.16	16.0	13.3	9969
7 Billets	55.3	57.2	1.64	15.9	13.2	10259
9 Billets	56.7	58.8	2.02	16.3	13.7	11006
LSD .05 Treatment	NS	NS	0.48	NS	NS	NS

The billets were cut with a combine harvester and hand planted in 1999.

Table 7. First stubble yield comparison of billet and whole stalk planting, rate of billet planting and starter fertilizer with LCP 85-384 at the Sugar Research Station during 2001.

Planting type and rate	Starter fertilizer	Cane yield	First Stubble - 2001				
			Stalk		Normal juice		Sugar Yield
			No.	Wt.	Brix	Sucrose	
		T/A	1000/A	lbs.	%	%	lbs/A
Whole	0-0-0	54.5	57.9	1.58	15.2	12.2	9237
1X Billet	0-0-0	50.9	57.5	1.63	15.4	12.6	8978
2X Billet	0-0-0	49.7	62.7	1.66	16.0	13.3	9365
Whole	45-45-45	51.4	62.7	1.75	15.7	13.0	9376
1X Billet	45-45-45	49.7	57.5	1.83	16.3	13.7	9592
2X Billet	45-45-45	49.5	54.6	1.60	16.0	13.2	9264
LSD .05 Treatments		NS	3.0	NS	0.9	1.1	NS
			Mean Effect				
Whole		52.9	60.3	1.67	15.4	12.6	9307
1X Billet		50.1	57.5	1.73	15.9	13.2	9285
2X Billet		49.6	58.7	1.63	16.0	13.3	9314
	0-0-0	51.7	59.4	1.62	15.6	12.7	9193
	45-45-45	50.0	58.3	1.73	16.0	13.3	9411
LSD .05 Rate Means		NS	2.1	NS	NS	NS	NS
LSD .05 Fall Fert. Mean		NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

Whole stalk planting consisted of a four running stalk planting rate; 1X Billet consisted of 6-9 running billets; and 2X Billet consisted of 12-18 running billets. Starter fertilizer was applied in the planting furrow in 1999, and normal fertilizer practice was followed in the spring of each crop year.

The date and rate of planting experiments were re-planted during late summer and fall 2001, although weather conditions did not allow two week planting intervals. In addition, small scale experiments were established comparing billet and whole stalk planting for HoCP 85-845 and HoCP 91-555. The experiments established on farms will be compared again in 2002, and yield comparisons will be obtained from multiple plant cane experiments on farms.

An experiment was conducted with a Cameco chopper harvester to evaluate the effect of different harvester settings on the amount of physical damage billets sustain while being cut. Differences were detected in number of damaged buds per billet, number of wounds per billet, and frequency of buds with no damage (Table 8). A total of 50 billets were examined with each setting combination. Billet length and bud number per billet did not vary significantly across treatments. Length ranged from 23-24 inches, while the average number of buds per billet ranged from 3.2-3.7. Factors associated with lower rates of damage were use of "leg-wraps" around the base-cutter shafts and the special "seed chopper" drums designed to cut longer billets. These two factors also were effective in the experiment conducted in 2000. The effect of the secondary extractor fan was inconsistent. In two previous experiments, damage increased when the secondary fan was engaged in one experiment but not the other. The overall results suggest the secondary fan can cause billet damage, but it is not a major causal factor. The angle of the elevator did not affect billet damage. This factor did not affect billet damage last year, so it appears that the elevator angle is not an important factor affecting damage. A final factor evaluated for the first time this year was the presence or absence of the football-shaped fins on the knock-down roller. There was no apparent benefit from removing the fins. This comparison was included based on observations in previous experiments of damage to stalks evident when the harvester backed away at the conclusion of a treatment. In those experiments slow speed (1 mph) of travel down the row was shown to increase billet damage, and the fins could have been the source of some of the extra damage. Slow speed of travel down the row was not included in this year's experiment.

Mechanical planting increases the amount of physical damage to billets, but the extent of added damage is uncertain. This season a billet experiment was planted the day before the billet damage experiment was conducted. The frequency of billets with no detectable damage in the planting furrow was only 27 %, whereas the billets cut the next morning from the same seedcane source with the same harvester settings had an undamaged billet frequency of 58 %. No experimental information has been obtained comparing planters or planter settings and the damage caused to billets.

The 2002 growing season has been an important one for assessing billet planting performance. A combination of a planting season with a variety of adverse weather conditions and a winter with widely spaced freezes, including a late freeze in March, created challenging stress conditions for billet plantings. A separate article is included in this issue describing an extensive assessment of plant cane stand problems during the spring of 2002. Factors already known to be associated with poor billet performance include short billet length, excessive physical billet damage, light planting rate, improper depth of cover, poor drainage, and herbicide injury. All of these factors were associated with stand problems during Spring, 2002. Avoidance of planting problems must be a high priority with billet planting. The addition of fertilizer at planting has improved yields in some, but not all, experiments. No chemical treatment to prevent stalk rot has been identified that consistently improves billet performance.

In the majority of experiments, the yield of whole stalk planting has been higher during the plant cane crop. However, the yield of whole stalk and billet plantings have been generally comparable over the entire crop cycle. Most of the experiments have now been conducted with LCP 85-384. Early experiments with CP 70-321 showed it to be erratic in billet planting performance. As other varieties are released, their ability to tolerate billet planting will need to be evaluated. The research results suggest that whole stalk planting will provide the highest yields over time with the least risk. However, when cane is badly lodged or labor and equipment is not available, it may be necessary to plant billets. Because billets are more sensitive to any problem, good planting practices are extremely important. Severe stand problems have been rare in fields with well-planted billets.

Table 8. Effect of Cameco chopper harvester settings on billet damage during 2001.

Treatment[1]	Damaged buds/billet	Wounds/ billet	Billets with no damage
Seed choppers, leg wraps, primary fan, 45 degree	0.10 c	0.4 c	72 %
Seed choppers, leg wraps, secondary fan+, 45 degree	0.22 abc	0.6 bc	62 %
Seed choppers, leg wraps, primary fan, 90 degree	0.16 bc	0.5 bc	66 %
Seed choppers, primary fan, 45 degree	0.18 bc	1.2 ab	44 %
Seed choppers, secondary fan+, 45 degree	0.22 abc	1.7 a	52 %
Seed choppers, no fins, secondary fan+	0.14 bc	1.6 a	48 %
Seed choppers, no fins, primary fan	0.18 bc	1.2 ab	56 %
Regular choppers, primary fan	0.38 a	1.7 a	32 %
Regular choppers, secondary fan+	0.30 ab	1.7 a	44 %
Regular choppers, leg wraps, primary fan	0.18 bc	0.6 bc	58 %

[1]Treatments consisted of special seed cutting drums with only one knife per drum designed to cut long billets, regular billet chopping drums with two blades removed to cut long billets, pipe fittings (leg wraps) that couple around the bottom of the base cutter shafts, primary extractor fan only, primary and secondary extractor fans, and aligning the elevator at 45 and 90 degrees. Values within a column followed by the same letter are not significantly different at $P = 0.05$.

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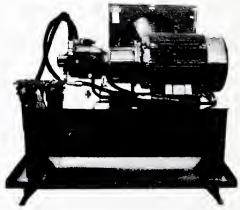

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An Assessment of Plant Cane Stand Problems During Spring, 2002

Jeff Hoy and Ben Legendre
LSU AgCenter

Research has indicated that billet plantings are more sensitive than whole-stalk plantings to any kind of planting problem or environmental stress. As a result, they are at greater risk for spring stand problems. Over seven years of testing, stand failures in experiments or commercial fields planted with billets have been rare. However, the question has persisted in everyone's mind: is there some set of conditions that could cause widespread stand failures in billet plantings? Adverse conditions occurred during the 2001 planting season and the 2001-2002 winter that created a lot of stress on planted cane and caused many to wonder whether this could be the year when billet plantings would fail, if they were going to. Therefore, an extensive assessment was made to determine the extent of occurrence of severe stand problems in billet and whole stalk plantings during Spring, 2002. A few fields of CP 70-321 and HoCP 91-555 were observed, but most of the assessment involved plantings of LCP 85-384.

Environmental problems during the planting season included heavy rainfall over an extended period during the middle of the planting season followed by a period of cooler than normal temperatures then an extended dry period. An early start to the harvest resulted in forced planting in wet soils in some fields. The rains also resulted in the departure of hand-planting labor crews and extensive lodging of cane. As a result, there was widespread planting of billets. Then a series of freezes occurred over the winter into March. At the St. Gabriel weather station, below freezing temperatures were recorded on seven days at the end of December, 10 days scattered throughout January, seven days during February, and five days at the beginning of March. The lowest recorded temperatures were 23 degrees on three days in December, 18 and 19 degrees on two days in January, 24 degrees in February, and 23 degrees in March. This combination of stress factors created the opportunity for extensive rotting of seed-cane, and in many fields, poorly established plants had to survive the winter.

So, what did we see, and what did we learn from our observations this spring? Stand failures necessitating plow-out and re-planting did occur throughout the cane belt. Most of these fields were planted with billets. Some farms experienced losses of 10% or greater of their planted acres. However, the total number of failed plantings across the industry was not extensive. It was a tough plant cane year, but there was no widespread failure of billet plantings. Stand problems were observed in whole-stalk as well as billet plantings, but it was apparent in some side-by-side plantings that stand problems were comparatively more severe in billet plantings.

Stand problems were associated with planting problems more than with the winter freezes we experienced. All of the severe stand problems occurred in soils in which planting problems are more likely to occur, either very sandy or heavy clay soils. Two scenarios resulted in severe problems: late August plantings in sand followed by heavy rains and late plantings in heavy soils followed by extended dry weather. In most of these cases, weather problems resulted in sub-optimal planting conditions, and the result was a less than perfect planting job. Improper depth of cover was a common problem factor in fields with stand failures. In these fields, cane failed to emerge, and a good stand was

never established in the late summer or early fall.

The winter and spring freezes did cause damage that could be seen as dead shoots from the previous year's growth that did not come back in the spring. This resulted in thinner initial stands than farmers have been used to in recent years. However, stands filled in well as the growing season progressed. It is uncertain what, if any, reduced yield was caused by freeze damage in these fields. Many, perhaps most, billet planted fields had adequate to good stands in the spring. In some cases with side-by-side planted billets and whole stalks, there was a vigor and height difference with the whole stalk plantings exhibiting better early growth. In other cases, there was no obvious difference. Yields will be determined in several side-by-side plantings to compare billet and whole-stalk performance during this season when plantings were exposed to multiple types of stress conditions.

A final type of stand problem encountered was due to insect feeding damage. Multiple fields damaged by wireworms were encountered, and in several cases with billets and whole stalks planted next to each other, the wireworm damage was similar in each. Two cases of extensive damage due to the sugarcane beetle also were encountered in billet plantings. In one, billets and whole stalks were planted next to each other, and extensive damage due to beetle feeding was evident in the billet planted field, while little or no damage was observed in the whole stalk planting. Extensive damage in a large planting of billets due to sugarcane beetle feeding was observed in a previous year as well, so it appears that billet plantings are more attractive to the sugarcane beetle for some reason.

In summary, stand problems were evident during Spring, 2002, and severe stand problems occurred mostly in billet plantings. Billets suffered more than whole stalks from any problem. However, a widespread failure did not occur even though billets were widely planted. Stand failures were associated with planting season problems not winter freezes. Well-planted billets produced adequate to good spring stands. However, under the conditions encountered during the 2001 planting season, it was difficult at times to plant billets well in very sandy or heavy clay soils. Thus, the risk of stand problems resulting in billet plantings will always be greater in these soils.

The results from the Spring, 2002 survey are encouraging overall. Billet planting will always carry greater risk than whole-stalk planting, but it appears to be a workable system. Additional improvements should come with more experience in billet planting and through breeding and selection for billet planting tolerance. Whole-stalk planting will provide the highest yields over time with the least risk and cost, so it is still the best planting system. However, when a lack of labor and equipment or lodged cane make it impossible to plant whole stalks, LCP 85-384 will produce good yields when planted well as billets. The results from research comparing billet and whole stalk planting from 2001 and practices that will provide the greatest chance of success in billet planting are contained in a separate article in this issue.

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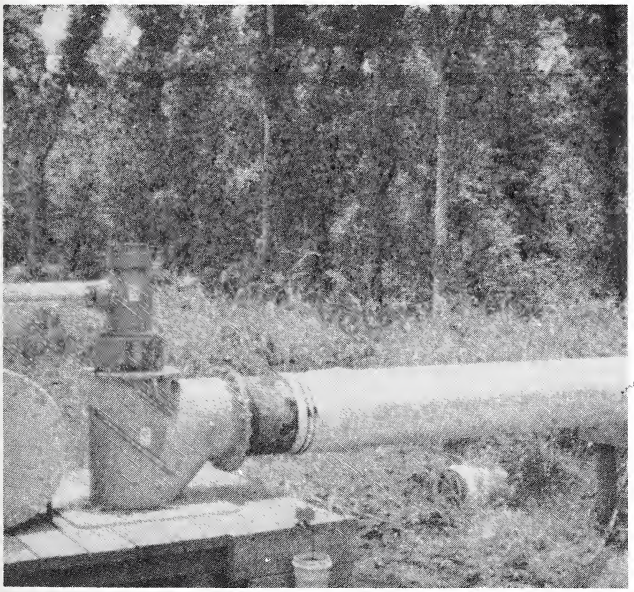

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Mexico - Marketing Allotments

Remember presidential candidate Ross Perot? He made a statement at the time of the NAFTA debate and that years' presidential primaries about the "great sucking sound from south of the border" should NAFTA be approved by the Congress. Well, a lot of things were said in those times, much of which, regretfully, have come back to haunt our nation and its economy. There is quite a bit of loss of jobs in manufacturing in the U.S. So, maybe old Ross knew something about that of which he spoke. Who would have thought that we, the U.S. sugar industry or any other sector of the U.S. economy would still be negotiating with this southern neighbor about the terms and conditions provided for and included in the approved NAFTA and its side letters. But, so be it, some six years later and we're still in "negotiations." However, if it is of any consequence, we are not the only commodity or industry that has had problems with Mexico over the NAFTA.

At this time, there is ongoing dialogue between the U.S. and the Mexican governments and industry representatives to resolve the dispute. I guess the thing that somewhat frustrates the situation is the fact that the high fructose corn syrup issue has been injected into the sugar debate. There is now what might be referred to as the "sweetener" debate. Back when the NAFTA was being negotiated, these two commodities' issues were not intertwined as one. But now, regrettably, they are. The U.S. sugar industry took its catastrophic hit to our sugar market share beginning in the mid 1970's when fructose came into being as an alternative sweetener. Our industry lost well over half of our markets to this new sweetener. The industry was rationalized in a way that most thought it was the beginning of the end for this proud commodity. It is not our industry's intention to allow our growers and processors to have to bear the brunt of fructose capturing the market in Mexico. We are continuing meetings between the two nations and their industry, and we are hopeful that a resolve can be found soon. It is in all our interest (sugar, fructose, Mexico and the U.S.) to find the common ground and to reach a resolve. To prolong the situation is harmful to all sectors; and, free trade is "supposed" to be about betterment for all players in the arena. But, any deal struck has to be a good and fair deal.

Marketing Allotments

The USDA released the WASDE (World Agriculture Supply & Demand Estimate) for sugar on Thursday, July 11, 2002. The WASDE is the estimate that the Secretary of Agriculture will utilize in her determination of whether marketing allotments begin or trigger-off on October 1. There were some changes to the forecast, on both the cane and beet side, due primarily to fewer acres for harvest. In the cane sector, according to the WASDE, the reduced number of acres were all in Florida.

There are several key variables that affect the marketing allotment determination.

1- Second tier imports/entries.

2- Circumvention entries.

3- Mexico TRQ calculations.

These same variables have been the "mystery" numbers for quite some time. There are two possible scenarios.

First, if the WTO's (World Trade Organization) TRQ (Tariff Rate Quota) is at the minimum and a full allocation is allowed for Mexico, then we have hit the 1.532 MST of imports. Over this amount would trigger "off"

allotments. There are estimates of 60,000 tons of "non-program" entries (circumvention and second tier sugar), and that amount would surely put us over the limit.

The second scenario could be if USDA reexamines its estimates and estimates a 60,000 ton shortfall in WTO TRQ, then the market supply estimate is then under the trigger and allotments would be "on." The estimate is presently 50,000 tons of shortfall, and in past years the shortfalls have been generally higher at approximately 65,000 tons.

Therefore, if Jack Roney of the American Sugar Alliance in Washington is correct, then the prospects of allotments are reasonably high. The only other question, in my mind as I write this article in early July, is when will the department make the announcement? There is strong debate as to whether it will happen by August 1, which is the date many observers feel should be the announcement date. But, if you have read this Bulletin and this article, and the announcement, one way or another hasn't been made, then I guess that at least that question is answered.

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Farm Bill Implementation Begins
Appropriations Could Be Farm Bill II
Mexico Task Force Meets With Mexican Officials
TPA Battle Moving To Conference
USDA WASDE July Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

We anticipate that the regulations to implement the sugar provisions of the farm bill will begin to emerge in the next few weeks. Once the regulations are released, your knowledge of the unique nature of the Louisiana sugar industry will be invaluable input during the public comment period. Focusing some time and attention on the practical application of those regulations will be essential if we want to ensure that the sugar program is operated to the maximum benefit of Louisiana's sugar industry.

Appropriations Could Be Farm Bill II

At the time of this writing, the House is preparing to consider the FY03 agricultural appropriations package. Farm groups are gearing up to fight off attacks on the new farm bill via appropriations amendments. A payment limitations amendment is being drafted and the House Agriculture Committee staff anticipate amendments to strike the honey and wool and mohair programs. While there are not yet any signs of a sugar amendment, we are prepared to battle any such amendment should it arise on the floor of the House.

Mexico Task Force Meets With Mexican Officials

US and Mexican trade negotiators are beginning to escalate attention on the sweetener dispute and the Mexico Task Force (MTF) has been an integral participant in those negotiations. The MTF held a series of meetings and conference calls with US trade officials in the middle of July, in addition to meetings with representatives from the Corn Refiners Association and the National Corn Growers Association. The MTF then traveled back to Mexico to meet with the Mexican sugar industry on the sidelines of government to government meetings. At the time of this writing, it is difficult to predict whether all of the diverse interests involved will be able to find common ground, though the negotiators are discussing a broad outline for a two step agreement containing many elements of a proposal put forward by the MTF. As always, the devil is in the details and more negotiations will be needed if consensus is to be reached in the near term.

TPA Battle Moving To Conference

Senator John Breaux (D-LA) was named a

Senate conferee for the trade conference and negotiations are set to begin soon. In addition to Breaux, Democratic Senate conferees are Sens. Max Baucus (D-MT) and John Rockefeller (D-WV). GOP Senate conferees are Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT).

The anti circumvention language crafted by Senator John Breaux (D-LA) remains a part of the Senate's TPA/TAA package. Representatives Bill Jefferson (D-LA) and Jim McCrery (R-LA) met with House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas (R-CA) in late June to urge House support for the Breaux language, and other Members are prepared to fight for its inclusion at the appropriate time, but 59 other Members sent a letter to Thomas in opposition to the language. Clearly, Breaux's leadership will be crucial to final approval of the anti circumvention language.

USDA WASDE July Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its July World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2002/03 fell slightly to 8,640,000 short tons, from 8,750,000 last month. 2001/02 production was unchanged at 8,017,000 tons. Cane sugar production for 2002/03 is down at 4,190,000 tons, compared to the June projection of 4,250,000 tons, while 2001/02 production remains at 4,017,000 tons. Beet sugar production is projected at 4,450,000, down from June's 4,500,000 tons. For 2001/02 non program imports were dropped 10,000 to 80,000 and 2002/03 non program imports are unchanged at 60,000. The 2002/03 tariff rate quota has not been announced. 2001/02 cane sugar production in Louisiana is unchanged at 1,575,000 short tons, while 2002/03 production is also unchanged at 1,700,000. For 2001/02, the stocks to use estimate was dropped back down to 16.0 percent from June's ratio of 16.1 percent. Ending stocks were down slightly at 1,620,000 short tons, versus 1,630,000 short tons last month.

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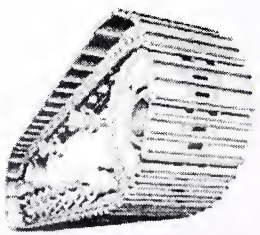

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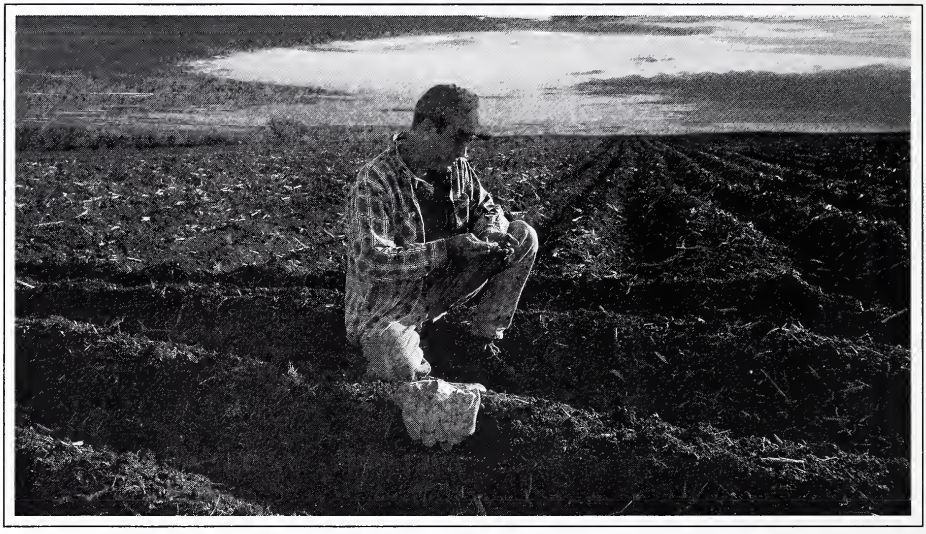

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Author's Note: As one explores "the back roads" of the cane belt it is not hard to find the areas in which rain has been plentiful. As a whole for this time of year, the fallow fields are grassier than they have been for the last five years. Many fields are overgrown with johnsongrass and other weeds. If growers can get a little dry weather, weedy fields should clean up rather quickly and easily before planting starts. When asked if he would provide a few comments on herbicide practices for the upcoming planting season, Dr. Jim Griffin provided the following thorough and concise article.

At Planting Weed Control

Jim Griffin
LSU AgCenter

By now you should have made some progress in controlling weeds in your fallow fields and are ready to plant. The most problematic weeds in sugarcane are the perennials, bermudagrass and johnsongrass, which survive from year to year by producing underground rhizomes. Once perennial weeds become established in the crop they are almost impossible to control. The annual weeds such as Raoulgrass (itchgrass), browntop panicum, other annual grasses, and tie-vines (morningglory) rely solely on seed production for survival and can be controlled in the crop with herbicides.

An effective fallow program should reduce numbers of weed seeds and rhizomes in soil to help assure that the newly planted sugarcane will get off to a good start. Notice that I said reduce numbers of weed seeds and rhizomes and not eliminate. In the soil, seeds of annual and perennial weeds and rhizomes of bermudagrass and johnsongrass are waiting for the opportunity to reinfest the planted cane. Planting in August and September allows significant time before the first killing frost for weeds to reestablish and produce rhizomes or seeds. If this is allowed to happen, your costly efforts to reduce weed populations during the fallow period are nullified. Continued attention to weeds throughout the plant cane and stubble crops will be critical to maintaining high yields and stubble longevity. If at this time you anticipate using any glyphosate/Roundup products to control bermudagrass or johnsongrass be sure to allow at least seven days before cultivation and planting.

Sugarcane is planted using whole stalks or billet seed pieces. The LSU AgCenter recommends that planted cane be covered with 3 to 4 inches of packed soil. This practice not only helps to promote uniform emergence and high yield in the plant cane crop, but also is important from a weed control standpoint. Soil-applied herbicides can only be effective when they are moved into the soil either by mechanical incorporation or by rainfall. Herbicides are then taken up by the shoots or roots of weed seedlings and interfere with weed growth and development. A packed seedbed helps to ensure that the herbicide is applied more uniformly and helps to prevent its loss when heavy rainfall washes loose soil from the row top to the middles. If not covered adequately with soil, cane seed pieces will be exposed to a high concentration of herbicide that can cause significant injury. Herbicide should be applied immediately after planting. Especially in fields

infested with bermudagrass or johnsongrass, herbicide should be applied broadcast rather than banded.

Herbicides recommended at planting and their broadcast rates include:

- Treflan, Trifluralin, Trilin, Tri-4, or Trific at 2 quarts/acre of the 4EC formulation. These herbicides must be mechanically incorporated or mixed with soil covering the seed within 24 hours to prevent loss.
- Prowl or Pendimax at 2.4 to 3.6 quarts/acre of the 3.3 EC formulation
- Sencor DF at 2.0 to 4.0 pounds/acre
- Sinbar 80WP at 1.0 to 1.5 pounds/acre
- Command 3ME at 2.66 to 3.33 pints/acre plus Direx 4L at 2 quarts/acre or Karmex/ Direx 80DF at 2.5 pounds/acre
- Velpar 75 DF at 10.7 ounces/acre or Velpar 2L at 32 ounces/acre plus Direx 4L at 1.8 quarts/acre or Karmex/Direx 80DF at 2.25 pounds/acre
- Atrazine 4L formulations at 2 to 4 quarts/ acre or 90DF formulation at 2.22 to 4.44 pounds/acre
- Direx 4L at 2.4 to 3.0 quarts/acre or Karmex/Direx 80DF at 3.0 to 3.75 pounds/ acre

For some of the herbicides listed above, a rate range is provided. The high rate should be used when you suspect weeds, especially perennial weeds, to be a problem and when cane is planted early. The combination of Command plus Karmex/Direx recently received a label for bermudagrass control after planting and at the high rate is very effective. Preliminary indications are that the Velpar plus Karmex/ Direx combination is also effective on bermudagrass.

I am often asked how much rainfall is needed to activate herbicides and how much residual control can be expected from herbicides applied at planting in August. A good rule of thumb is that rainfall of at least a half inch within 10 days is needed to get the most activity from a soil-applied herbicide. Once a herbicide is in the soil it is broken down both by soil microorganisms and through chemical reactions. The rate of breakdown varies depending on the specific herbicide and rate, but under moist, warm soil conditions herbicides are degraded very rapidly. Consequently, the herbicide can only provide weed control for a limited amount of time. Realistically, for most herbicides weed control can be expected for around 8 weeks. Hopefully by the tail end of this period the cooler nights and shorter days will decrease emergence and growth of the summer weeds. However, as the fall approaches winter weeds will begin to germinate.

One option used effectively by some growers is to apply Command/Direx, trifluralin products, Prowl, or Velpar/Direx at planting in July/ August followed by an application of atrazine or some other herbicide in October or November. This will help to assure that cane remains free of weeds through the winter and into the following spring.

Weed control recommendations for sugarcane are published annually in the LSU AgCenter publication entitled "Louisiana Suggested Chemical Weed Control Guide" and are based on research conducted by weed scientists in the LSU AgCenter and with USDA. Recommendations also can be found in the "Sugarcane Production Handbook - 2001", Section II. Information from these publications is available through your County Agent's office or your consultant, and also can be found on the LSU AgCenter website (www.agctr.lsu.edu/ weedscience) under "Weed Science Related Publications".

THE AMERICAN SUGAR CANE LEAGUE WELCOMES SOUTHERN CANE SALES & SERVICE AS A NEW COMMERCIAL MEMBER

THE BATON ROUGE LINE

By Tom Spradley
Spradley and Spradley

Legislature Adjourns - No Damage Done

The 2002 Legislature adjourned from it's "fiscal-only" session without doing much to the status quo. The budget was approved with only insignificant increases, mostly from federal money sources, and with most state government programs intact. The state capital outlay budget, the money we spend on contruction, was approved without too many controversial projects and legislators have returned to their home districts to explain to constituents what the state of Louisiana is (or isn't) doing to us.

One of the things they will be explaining is the so-called Stelly Amendment. The Stelly Plan is one of twelve constitutional amendments citizens will be voting on this fall. If the Stelly Plan sounds familiar to you that is because this is the second one in a few years. Voters killed the last one at the ballot box a couple of years ago. "Stelly One" sought to swap some of the sales taxes you pay for an increase in personal income tax.

The first version would have increased taxes significantly and was defeated by a vote that was not close. Representative Stelly's first effort started off as a revenue neutral bill but got tagged with pay increases for teachers and others. This version, "Stelly Two", is pretty close to zero in revenue generated. But that doesn't mean YOU will be paying less. Check the chart below to see what the change means to you. " Stelly Two" still seeks to swap some of the sales taxes you pay (the state sales taxes on food and utilities) for small increases in the personal income tax.

Find your situation on the chart below and make your decision.

Estimated Tax Consequences Of Shifting Away From The Sales Tax On Food & Utilities And Towards The Personal Income Tax

Federal Adjusted Gross Income		State Income Tax Change	Federal Income Tax Savings	Food & Utilities Sales Tax Savings	Net Impact of Tax Proposal	Net % Change
$0	$5,000	$0	$0	$34	($34)	-100%
$5,000	$10,000	$0	$0	$48	($48)	-66%
$10,000	$15,000	($18)	$0	$55	($73)	-44%
$15,000	$20,000	($22)	$0	$60	($82)	-26%
$20,000	$25,000	($20)	$0	$177	($197)	-35%
$25,000	$30,000	($13)	$0	$186	($199)	-28%
$30,000	$40,000	$55	$8	$197	($150)	-18%
$40,000	$60,000	$112	$19	$213	($120)	-10%
$60,000	$80,000	$310	$72	$229	$9	1%
$80,000	$100,000	$640	$181	$240	$219	11%
$100,000	$120,000	$1,015	$288	$249	$478	21%
$120,000	$140,000	$1,346	$365	$257	$725	28%
$140,000	$160,000	$1,519	$426	$263	$830	26%
$160,000	$180,000	$1,653	$483	$266	$905	23%
$180,000	$200,000	$1,785	$516	$274	$996	22%
$200,000	plus	$3,112	$983	$317	$1,811	12%

Current	Proposed	Rates
$0 - $20,000	$0 - $25,000	2% Joint Brackets; Single Brackets are One-Half These Values
$20,000-$100,000	$25,000 - $50,000	4% 100% Elimination of Federal Excess Itemized Deductions
$100,000 - plus	$50,000 - plus	6% Fully Retain Deduction For Federal Taxes Paid

Eliminate 4 cents sales tax on food and residential utility consumption.

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Prowl controls Seedling Johnsongrass:

- Stops the development of Rhizome Johnsongrass
- Rhizome Johnsongrass can develop in 3 weeks
- Established Rhizome Johnsongrass decreases yeilds for the life cycle of your plant cane crop

Prowl controls Itchgrass:

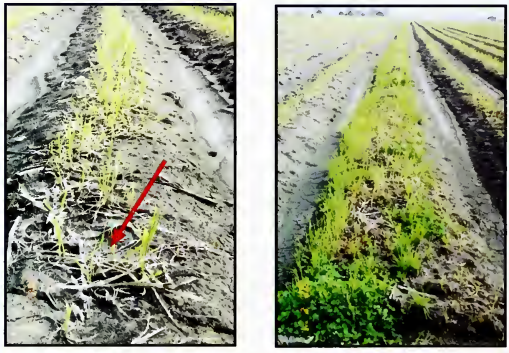
- Stopping the development of seed can eliminate Itchgrass from your sugarcane fields
- For best results, treat your fields with Prowl at planting, in the spring, and at layby

JOHNSONGRASS CONTROL WITH PROWL HERBICIDE

Untreated **Prowl + Sencor**

Photo taken with Pete Dufresne at Dufeco Planting Company. According to Pete "Prowl performs extremely well and is almost a must in your chemical program. It seems to be more effective than any chemical I have used, especially on johnsongrass!"

TODD LANDRY, LOREAUVILLE HARVESTING
LOREAUVILLE, LA • FEBRUARY 14, 2002



Treated Billets **Untreated Check**

Prowl is safe to whole stalk or billet planted cane. Plant cane should be covered with 3 to 4 inches of packed soil at time of planting.

Plant cane field treated Sept. 2001 with 2 Qt/A Prowl + 1 lb/A Sencor, still clean Feb. 14, 2002!

For questions contact BASF:

Marc A. Grabert
(337) 367-0925

CLYDE BOLTON
BOLTON CANE COMPANY
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Prowl + Atrazine banded. Seedling johnsongrass control. Looks good, but a broadcast application would look better! (Seedling johnsongrass turning into rhizome johnsongrass)

For questions contact BASF:

Jerry Jack Ford
(318) 445-8654

BASF Plant Cane Herbicide Recommendations: Broadcast Rate/Acre

TANK-MIX: A+B

A. Grass Base Herbicide for Sugarcane:

	PROWL
Browntop Panicum and annual grass	1.5 - 2 qt./acre
Seedling Johnsongrass	2 - 3 qt./acre
Itchgrass	3 - 3.6 qt./acre
Bermudagrass suppression	3.6 qt./acre

B. Broadleaf Herbicide:

Karmex DF — 3 - 3.6 lbs/acre (better annual grass, morningglory, and 10 - 20% better on seedling johnsongrass control than Atrazine)

OR

Atrazine — 4 - 8 pts./acre (10 - 20% better on winter broadleaf weeds than Karmex DF)

OR

Sencor — 1.0 lb./acre - 1.5 lb./acre (20% better Seedling Johnsongrass control than Atrazine, Helps suppress Bermudagrass, 10 - 20% better on winter broadleaf weeds than Karmex DF)

OR

Spartan — 6.7 oz. - 8 oz./acre (nutsedge)

OR

Sinbar — 1.33 lb./acre - 1.5 lb./acre (about the same ratings as Sencor but with possible crop injury, and helps suppress Bermudagrass)

For questions contact BASF:

Marc A. Grabert (337) 367-0925

Jerry Jack Ford (318) 445-8654

always read and follow label directions

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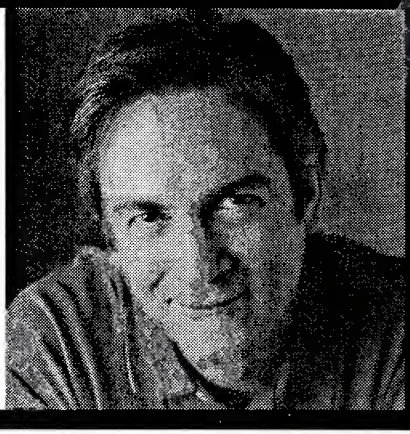

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MILLING AROUND

By Willem Kampen
Audubon Sugar Institute
Louisiana State University AgCenter

Improved Removal Of Evaporator Scale

The Louisiana raw sugar factories have to stop and clean the evaporator tubes every 10 to 12 days. Cleaning of evaporators is an important cost. The cost of the chemicals alone (caustic soda/soda ash and/or hydrochloric acid) amounts to 4 to 5 cents per ton of cane processed. Downtime and loss of production are also significant, while the effect of corrosion can also be severe.

Scale Formation

Scaling is the deposition and growth on heat exchange surfaces (chiefly inside the tubes and on the vessel walls) of materials undergoing irreversible chemical reactions or having solubilities decreasing with increasing temperatures and/or concentration. These insoluble impurities form a hard scale, especially in the last effect evaporator. ICP (Inductive Plasma Analysis) analyses of scale from several factories shows that the four main scale components are in order of importance: silicon, calcium, magnesium and phosphorus.

Silicon as silicon dioxide is quite often 21%, calcium as calcium oxide may be as high as 14%, magnesium as magnesium oxide may be as high as 7% and phosphorus as phosphorus pentoxide may be as high as 14%. Silicon and magnesium levels in the juice depend to a large extent upon cane variety, weather and soil conditions. Calcium and phosphorus levels depend to a large extent upon processing conditions as liming method, clarifier conditions as pH and time. Hence, operational conditions can minimize these concentrations in clarified juice and reduce scale formation.

It has been demonstrated clearly that electro coagulation of clarified juice minimizes scale (Kampen, Njapau and Monge, Int Sugar J, 11/2000). Silicon levels can easily be reduced by 80% and calcium, magnesium and phosphorus by 10 to 40%. By not processing cane rapidly, oxalic acid may be formed, which with calcium forms a hard, glass like, scale.

Louisiana cane is quite often high in aconitic acid and the calcium and magnesium aconitates end up in filter mud and scale, as they are only slightly soluble. The calcium magnesium aconitate however ends up in the molasses, as it is soluble. In the last effect evaporators we measured from 34 to 63 grams of ash per ton of cane. The real figure is higher as there is also some organic matter and moisture. Evaporator operation also affects scaling as high temperatures and not running liquid levels at an appropriate height will increase scale formation but may also bake it on.

Scale Removal

A large number of tests have been and still are being carried out with different cleaning agents. A BASF product shows the most promise of rapid cleaning. It cleaned bottom sections of tubes, where typically the thickest scale occurs, in the laboratory in less than one hour of boiling time. This product contains all the cleaning ingredients required hence a one time boil out will suffice. We found one factory having a type of scale, which could only be totally removed after the composition had been adjusted. This composition in turn, would not clean the other scale types. The new product shows reduced corrosion rates as well.

In some cases, sodium acid sulfate cleaned the tubes well while in other cases it would not. Cocktails with combinations of these products are also being tested. Tests with acids worked but the corrosion rates were very high. We expect to have most of the testing completed at Audubon Sugar Institute this summer so we can run large scale tests at the factories this grinding season.

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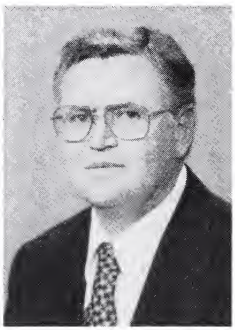

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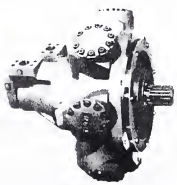

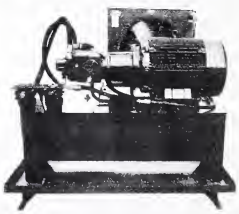

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Dedicated Research Funding Summaries

Scientists who receive funding from the League's Dedicated Research Committee are requested to prepare a short summary of their work at the end of the year. Those reports will be published each month until all of them have been printed. The following are reports from research during the year 2001.

Sugarcane Breeding in the LSU Agricultural Center. Kenneth A. Gravois and Keith P. Bischoff, Sugar Research Station

The primary objective of the LSU Agricultural Center Sugarcane Variety Development Program is to contribute to the profitability of the Louisiana sugarcane industry by developing improved sugarcane varieties. A total of 97,898 seedlings from 233 crosses from the 2000 crossing series were planted in the field in the spring of 2001. A total of 93,790 seedlings survived transplanting. The majority of the seedlings were from crosses of commercial varieties and elite experimental varieties. Selection will be carried out in 2002 when the seedlings are in the first stubble crop.

Photoperiod treatments to induce flowering began on May 31 and continued until September 10. Flowering in 2001 was excellent, with 531 crosses being made. Germination tests were conducted in December. Seed production for 2001 was excellent with 569,552 being produced.

In the fall of 2001, individual selection was practiced on 38,422 first stubble seedlings that represented the 1999 crossing series. Family selection (top 82% in 2001) was utilized based on information from the cross appraisal study. Seedling for selection were down because of poor survival during the extreme drought of 2000 shortly after planting. Of the 38,422 clones, 3,369 were selected and planted to establish the first-line trials.

Established procedures were used to advance superior clones of the 1998 crossing series from first-line trials to second-line trials (759 clones) and of the 1997 crossing series from second-line trials to increase trials (392 clones). After preliminary ratings for cane yield and plant type in August, clones with acceptable ratings were further evaluated for lodging, borer damage, presence of disease, presence of pith/tube, and Brix/sugar per ton.

The best 37 experimental varieties from the 1996 crossing series were assigned permanent variety designations in the fall of 2001. Newly assigned varieties were entered in replicated nursery trials at three locations (St. Gabriel Research Station, USDA Ardoyne Farm, Iberia Research Station). "L" , "HoCP or Ho" varieties of the 2001 series were exchanged in the fall of 2001 to plant cooperative infield and nursery tests the following year.

Experimental varieties were replanted in infield and nursery tests (13 varieties of the 2000 series), introduced to the outfield tests (four varieties of the 1999 series), and planted in outfield tests (two varieties of the 1997 series and two varieties of the 1998 series). Breeding personnel assisted Dr. Jeff Hoy and Dr. Gene Reagan to enter experimental varieties in the sugarcane smut and sugarcane borer resistance trials, respectively.

Breeding and Management Research with Sugarcane at the Iberia Research Station. Howard P. Viator, Iberia Research Station, New Iberia, LA, Kenneth Gravois Sugar Research Station St. Gabriel, LA

Objective a. Experimental clones were evaluated in nine LSU AgCenter and USDA breeding nurseries and "infield" tests located within the Bayou Teche Region. Over 400 genetically distinct clones are planted at locations in Jeanerette, New Iberia and Youngsville.

Objective b. The second cane cycle of a long-term study of the effects of combine-trash management was initiated in 2001. Measurements of soil carbon and total nitrogen revealed differences among the trash management treatments. Soil from plots on which cane was burned standing prior to harvest contained approximately 10% less nitrogen and 7% less carbon than soil from plots where harvest residue was retained. These observations, of course, are quite preliminary and will require further substantiation.

Objective c. Yield measurements of plant cane were determined for a precision agriculture study. Field variation for the 19, 1.5 acre cells was relatively low for measurements prior to harvest, indicating the field was fairly uniform in soil fertility and plant population and height. At harvest, however, yield measurements in the geo-referenced cells demonstrated substantial fluctuation, with tonnage ranging from 20 to 39 tons/acre and sugar/acre ranging from 3,876 to 7,013 lbs/acre. Variation in yield was mostly determined by lodging , with lodged and erect plots differing an average of over eight tons/acre. Correlations suggested strong association between soil pH and yield, soil phosphorus and yield and soil hard pan depth and yield. Consideration will be given to variable applications of lime and the use of deep subsoiling to mitigate the hardpan dilemma during the next fallow period.

Objective d. Labor hired with League funds was used to partially support Dr. Hallmark's plant nutrition work. He evaluated several commercially-available products such as Powerperk, SUL-15, fish emulsion and Carpramid. He also evaluated other available products such as stabilized nitrogen sources, potassium chloride, sewage sludge, gypsum and copper fertilizer.

Meeting the Challenges of Increasing Sugar Yields Through Variety Testing in Nurseries, Infield Trials, Outfield Trials and Specialty Studies. Edwis O. Dufrene, Agronomist, Donnie Garrison, Agronomist, Edward P. Richard, Research Leader, USDA-ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA

Data from eight infield trials (with varieties from the 1995 through the 1999 HoCP and L series) and eighteen nursery trials (containing varieties from the 1996 through the 2000 HoCP series) are currently being analyzed. A harvestability test was harvested in 2001, using a combine harvester. A ten-stalk sample was cut from each plot and sent to the sucrose lab for juice analysis at the time of harvest. Plots were rated for erectness prior to being harvested. Plots weights were obtained using a weigh wagon. Two days after harvest, mulch was burned off and scrap was collected and weighed. A statistical analysis showed that there were varietal differences in regards to the percent of scrap being left behind. There was also a correlation between the percent of scrap and erectness ratings. These results are very similar to what was obtained in previous years using a soldier harvester.

Three date of planting tests were harvested in 2001. One of these tests also looked at the effect of planting date as a function of planting method (billet vs. whole stalk). Although an analysis has not been completed at this time, tests in previous years have consistently shown an advantage to planting early, particularly with HoCP 85-845. LCP 85-384 has generally been the least affected by date of planting.

Maturity curves for the current and soon to be released varieties were developed using a 2-week harvesting interval beginning on August 28, 2001. This information was provided to the mills, County Agents, and other interested parties as it was generated.

Expanded Utilization of Basic Germplasm in Developing High-Yielding Sugarcane Cultivars. John Veremis, Research Geneticist, Edwis Dufrene, Agronomist, Donnie Garrison, Agronomist, Michael Grisham, Research Plant Pathologist, Yong-Bao Pan, Research Plant Molecular Geneticist, Ed Richard, Research Leader, Thomas Tew, Research Geneticist, William White, Research Entomologist, USDA-ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA

The American Sugar Cane League provided financial support of the basic breeding program (labor and supplies) at Houma in 2001. The overall basic breeding program was materially strengthened with the selection of superior wild-derivative clones from several new basic breeding lines. These will be used during the Fall 2002 crossing season. Unfortunately, over 90% of the seedlings from basic crosses made during 2000-2001 planted at Ayrdone Farm were lost due to the extended period that they were under water following Tropical Depression Allison in early June. Fortification of the levee system and the installation of a second drainage pump should alleviate this problem in the future.

During Fall 2001, over 120 wild-derivative by high-sucrose-commercial-type crosses were made that involved over 30 wild-derivative clones. Several of these crosses were only possible because we doubled our photoperiod capacity by converting our glasshouse into a photoperiod facility using fiberglass-reinforced polyethylene fabric, using funds provided by this committee in 2001.

An experiment was conducted to determine the feasibility of utilizing single-stalk 6" pot culture to increase the number and range of crosses that can be made during a crossing season within the facilities available. The results of this experiment were very encouraging, warranting further adoption of this technique during the Fall 2002 crossing season. Of particular note was the fact that HoCP 91-555 flowered in these small pots. As a result, this was the first time that it could be used as a parent in planned crosses.

Control of Ratoon Stunting Disease Through Breeding for Resistance and Cultural Practices (Continuing). Michael P. Grisham, Research Plant Pathologist[1],Jack C. Comstock, Research Plant Pathologist[2], Thomas L. Tew, Research Geneticist[1], Jimmy D. Miller, Research Leader[2], Yong-Bao Pan, Research Plant Molecular Geneticist[1], John Veremis, Research Geneticist[1]; [1]USDA-ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA, [2]USDA-ARS, Sugarcane Field Station, Canal Point, FL

The 2001 RSD ratings of the Louisiana clones tested at Canal Point were made available to Dr. J. Miller for his use in making crosses for Louisiana.

The tissue samples from the inheritance test in the fall of 2000 were collected and evaluated. The plant-cane, tissue-blot samples from the inheritance study were analyzed. Initial review of results indicate that progress can be made in producing clones resistant to RSD by selecting parents with resistance.

The clones advanced to the second-line trials in 2000 and in 2001 (approximately 1, 800) have been inoculated and will be evaluated in the fall of 2002. The dip inoculation technique conducted on the 2001 second-line clones is known to be an effective method; however, small billets were inoculated and planted, causing concern that a sufficient stand of cane will be established in the plots for evaluation and the procedure required extensive time and labor. The procedure will be modified to make it more efficient and practical for inoculating large numbers of clones.

All varieties in the RSD inoculated nurseries have been sampled for the 2001 season and are being evaluated. The nurseries contain many of the clones used as parents in the next breeding cycle.

A new field test was planted in 2001 to continue to evaluate RSD spread among near release varieties.

Evaluation of High Biomass Cultivars. Thomas Tew, Research Geneticis[1], Edwis Dufrene, Agronomist[1], Donnie Garrison, Agronomist[1], Gillian Eggleston, Research Chemist[2], Michael Grisham, Research Plant Pathologist[1], Richard Johnson, Research Agronomist[1], Yong-Bao Pan, Research Plant Molecular Geneticist[1], Ed Richard, Research Leader[1], John Veremis, Research Geneticist[1], William White, Research Entomologist[1]; [1]USDA-ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA; [2] USDA-ARS, SRRC, New Orleans, LA

Six early-generation wild-derivative cultivars were selected for total biomass potential at Houma. These six cultivars, along with LCP 85-384 as a control, were increased at the USDA-ARS Ardoyne Farm in 2001, and planted in two yield tests located at Diamond W Ranch at Welsh, LA and at the Ardoyne Farm. Total biomass yield will be obtained in the plant, first ratoon, and second ratoon crops during 2002-2004.

An additional 26 early-generation wild-derivative cultivars were planted at Ardoyne Farm and will be visually evaluated for high biomass potential under minimum cultural input. Selection criteria will include early vigor, ratooning ability, high stalk population, and resistance to insects and diseases. Other desirable characteristics will include harvestability, erect growth habit, and keeping quality because the "cut to crush" interval is expected to be longer.

A Molecular Sugarcane Breeding Program for Louisiana Sugarcane Industry. Yong-Bao Pan, Research Plant Molecular Geneticist[1], Tom Tew, Research Geneticist[1], John Veremis, Research Geneticist[1], William White, Research Entomologist[1],Ray Schnell, Research Geneticist[2]; [1]USDA-ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA., [2]USDA-ARS, Subtropical Horticulture Research Station, Miami, FL USDA-ARS, SRRC Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA.

First, we have cloned and sequenced the 5S ribosomal gene region from 87 wild sugarcane species maintained at the World Collection in Miami, FL. These include 22 clones of *S. spontaneum*, 22 clones of *S. officinarum*, 16 clones of *S. robustum*, 10 clones of *S. sinense*, 15 clones of *S. barberi*, and 2 clones of *S. edule*. DNA sequence analysis will be conducted in early 2002 using a computer software program to reveal the extent of sequence variation among the 87 species as a means of identifying new DNA markers. We also conducted a general survey and visual rating of all the vegetative clones at the World Collection to identify clones that could be included in the Basic Breeding Program.

Second, the lead scientist has been participating in the Basic Breeding Program. In 2001, we maintained and evaluated several thousand progeny clones on approximately 2-acre lands. These included F-1, F-2 and BC-1 populations. For example, we have succeeded in crosses using Djatiroto (a *S. spontaneum* species) as the female and LCP 85-384 and CP 62-258 as the males and have selected a few progeny for further genetic improvement through backcrossing. Using this DNA marker OPA-11-366, we were able to identify 321 hybrids out of the 650 progeny from the cross (Djatiroto x LCP 85-384) and 36 hybrids of 96 progeny from the cross (Djatiroto x CP 62-258). We also collected data on other agronomic traits during 1999 to 2001 such as cold tolerance, spring vigor, spines, stalk diameter, BRIX, and collected samples for cytological studies. Based on the data collected, ten F_1 hybrids were selected in 1999 (five from each cross). Four of these F-1 hybrids were backcrossed to sugarcane cultivars during the 2000 and 2001 to produce BC-1 and BC-2 generations. In 2001, 14 more F-1s and 19 BC-1s were selected. These selected clones were planted in the field and greenhouse for further evaluation and improvement.

Third, we have successfully transferred the sugarcane microsatellite technology into the Louisiana sugarcane industry in 2001. All varieties, breeding lines and wild clones used as parents during the 2000 and 2001 basic crossing seasons were fingerprinted with microsatellites. Currently, we are studying DNA sequence variation at the large rDNA chromosome site. We are looking at these DNA sequences with the hope of finding DNA markers from the large rDNA chromosome site that can

istinguish commercial sugarcane from its wild relatives. The lead scientist is currently establishing orking relationships with other scientists to develop trait-specific DNA markers. For example, the ad scientist is collaborating with Dr. Tom Tew, Dr. Ray Schnell (USDA, Miami, FL), Dr. Robert enry (Australia) to develop microsatellite fingerprints for parental varieties and breeding lines urrently being used in the Commercial Program. During 2001, the lead scientist assisted Dr. Bill hite in a study to identify genes involved in bore-resistance and Dr. Mike Grisham in a study to lentify genes involved in disease resistance. The lead scientist is seeking potential cooperation with her scientists on high sucrose- and low fiber-specific markers and on biomass.

Fourth, more than 1,000 potential transformed sugarcane plants have been produced from the urrent leading varieties LCP 85-384 and HoCP 91-555 since 1999. Among these, about 900 plants ere produced from callus tissue that had been cultured in a medium containing glufosinate, the ctive component in the herbicide Ignite/Liberty. Twenty-nine plants were produced from callus ssue cultured in a medium containing the antibiotic *Geneticin*. The callus tissues were bombarded ith gene constructs including *Ubi.BAR* for glufosinate resistance, *Ubi.Km* for Geneticin resistance, *Ubi.HUT* and *Ubi.HAS* for resistance to virus infection. In 2001, we were able to import four Liberty-esistant sugarcane clones from Texas and used these clones as controls. We sprayed about 800 ansgenic plants and the Texas plants with Ignite (1 lb ai/Acre). Several plants exhibited no visual jury symptoms for the herbicide as did the Texas plants. Molecular biology experiments will be onducted on the survivors to confirm that the gene insertion took place.

n-line NIR Measurements for Cane Analysis. Lee Madsen, Brian White, Peter Rein, Audubon ugar Institute, LSU Ag Center

FOSS Tecator offered us the use on trial of an instrument specially designed for cane analysis. his was installed at Cinclare mill and tested during the last grinding season. A total of 150 samples ere run using the FOSS Infracana Near Infra Red System (FINIRS). Cane was analyzed by the onventional core press method and by direct analysis of cane (DAC) using a wet disintegrator. his data was used for developing calibration equations.

The system includes a shredder into which the core sample can be deposited, and can turnover any more samples in the same unit of time, which could allow for multiple sampling single loads. he FINIRS can provide an analytical prediction in ~110 seconds, which improves analysis turnover.

Calibration equations were derived using the DAC data. Values of standard error (SEC) are xcellent, indicating that NIR can give reliable measurements of cane quality. Values of SEC using ie core press data were significantly inferior to these.

The NIR system allows for analysis of more complicated matrices than core press analysis, articularly with regards to mud laden sugarcane samples. In many instances, the core press will fail o get juice from a sample that is mostly mud. DAC analysis can because the matrix is modified with xtraction water. NIR calibrated against DAC can yield a good result quickly, where no result was ossible before. This also applies to samples that are mostly "trash" (tops or other leafy material). n a preliminary basis, it appears that mud and "trash" may be quantitated by differential in spectral itensity (log 1/I), as mud and "trash" absorb the NIR light. This may prevent unnecessary payments ade for mud or "trash".

In conclusion, the FINIRS system provides a highly precise, accurate, fast, and flexible solution o the analysis of sugar cane for purposes of cane payment and factory quality control. The FINIRS an provide results that are comparable to routine cane analyses, whilst discriminating between lean and dirty cane. An average of these results would provide a much more accurate assessment of ane quality than the single sample regime currently in place. In terms of cost effectiveness, the unit eeds only one operator (as opposed to 4, for the core press system), and will benefit the factory and ie farmers by providing more accurate data for cane payment and for factory control.

Improving Soil Tests Fertility for Sugarcane Production. Jim J. Wang, Chuck Kennedy, LSU Department of Agronomy, William B. Hallmark, Iberia Research Station, Benjamin Legendre Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service

Search for improving soil test accuracy and efficiency has focused on the evaluation of Mehlich 3, a multi element extractant. With the use of this extractant, we will be able to replace three separate extractions for K, P, and micronutrients that are currently used in Louisiana. The evaluation was based on 319 samples from all parishes within Louisiana. In general, Mehlich 3 method correlated highly with NH_4OAC extraction of K, Ca, Mg and Na. It also correlated with Bray 2 extraction of soil P. Grouping soils with different acidity further improves correlation with P. In addition, the Mehlich 3 method correlated well with DTPA extractable Cu and Zn, but not Mn and Fe. Our laboratory evaluation suggests that Mehlich 3 extraction has the potential for replacing current methods for predicting available soil K, P and certain micronutrients. Sugarcane field verification will be needed in order to complete the over all evaluation. In addition, search of a quick method for determining lime requirement was focused on the evaluation of Adams and Evans Buffer method. This method will allow us to easily adjust lime rate for desired soil pH. Our initial evaluation indicated that this method generally yields a similar lime rate as our currently used $Ca(OH)_2$ titration method. The field verification is needed to determine if adoption of this method is warranted for sugarcane production.

Soil K fertility studies :

To verify soil test for predicting K fertility, a Commerce silty clay soil (41% clay, 50% silt and 9% sand) low to medium in K was selected for this study. Soil analysis showed a pH of 5.2, organic matter of 1.8% and P, K, Mg, and Ca ppm levels of 195 (very high), 235, 620 (very high) and 253 (low), respectively. A 100 lb/A K_2O rate is recommended based on soil test K for this site.

The field study was conducted on second stubble of sugarcane LCP 85 384. Plots consisted of three 6' by 50' rows with a 4' alley separating the ends of all plots. All plots also received 160 lb/A nitrogen. No P was applied because very high level of P was found in the soil. All treatments were replicated 4 times. After fertilization, the sugarcane rows were hipped up and the cane was grown to maturity using standard cultural practices. Tissue samples were taken on July 15, 2001 for analyzing K uptake. The plots were harvested on October 1, 2001. The number of millable stalks in each sugarcane plot were counted. Eight stalks were randomly selected from each plot to measure average stalk weight and commercially recoverable sugar (CRS).

With LCP 85 384., application of K fertilizer did produce a significant yield increase at 100 lb K_2O /A at this site as would be suggested by soil test. The tissue test showed K was generally in the sufficient range.

In addition to the field experiment, K supplying power of several sugarcane growing soils that were tested low in soil test K (NH_4OAC extractable K) were evaluated by laboratory methods to determine why these soils did not show crop yield response to K fertilization. A thorough understanding of these soils will improve our prediction of soil fertility. We have confirmed that some of these soils have very high slowly available K, which normal soil tests could not determine. Our research suggested that a factor or test may have to be developed in order to systematically resolve this problem for sugarcane production.

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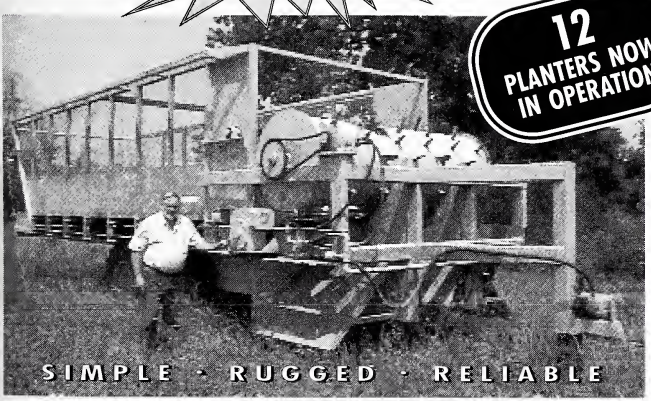

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Jackie Theriot

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The Sugar Bulletin

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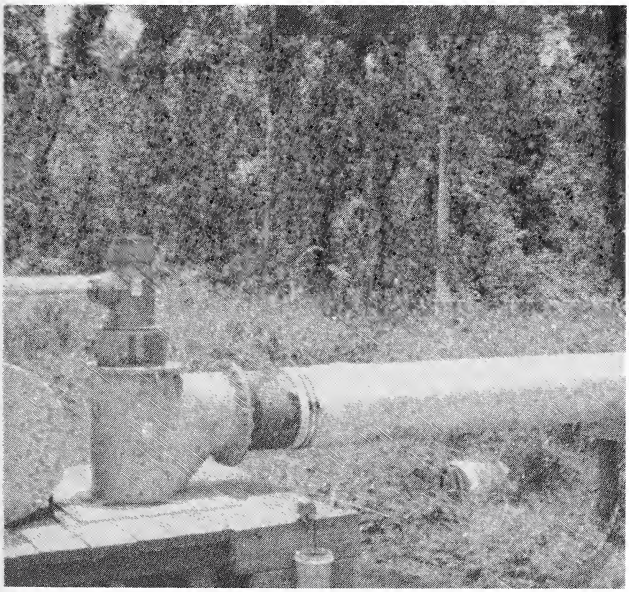

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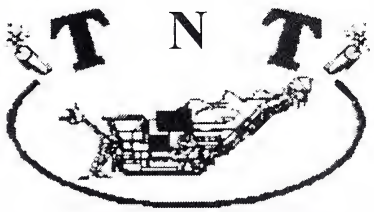

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Jackie Theriot
King Sucrose LXI

The Louisiana Sugar Cane Festival and Fair Association announced that Mr. Jackie Theriot of St. Martinville will reign as King Sucrose LXI over the annual festival. This year's festival will be held in New Iberia, September 26 - 29, 2002.

Jackie Theriot is General Manager of the Louisiana Sugar Cane Co-op, Inc. in St. Martinville, LA and is presently the Chairman of the Board of the American Sugar Cane League.

He was raised on a farm in Catahoula, Louisiana in 1940. After high school, he attended and received his undergraduate degree in Agronomy from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (formerly the University of Southwestern Louisiana). From there, he did foreign language and foreign affairs training at Howard University, and postgraduate studies in International Affairs at the Maxwell School of Social Science at Syracuse University in New York. Jackie is trilingual, speaking English, French, and Spanish.

After college, he joined the Peace Corps during the administration of them President John F. Kennedy, worked in the State Department and as the Associate Director of the Peace Corps in Niger, Africa. Following that tour of duty he worked several years longer in Africa in association with Texas A & M, and other organizations. Since 1969 he has farmed and been directly involved in the processing end of cane and raw sugar production. He has also continued to do consulting work in association with cooperatives, sugar production, mechanization, and processing.

Jackie has served in several organizations and as officers of many of these. This includes the Louisiana Farm Bureau where he is still the Secretary/Treasurer and serves on the Board of Directors for this state organization. He previously served as Chairman of the LAFB Sugar Advisory Committee, as well as past Chairman of the American Society of Sugar Cane Technologist, Governor's Task Force on Excess and Overweight Vehicles, the Louisiana Tax Restructuring Task Force, President and School Board Member of the St. Martin Parish School System, member of the Board of the Sugar Association in Washington, D.C., the Businessman of the Year, Louisiana Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the LSU French Association, Commissioner of Agriculture's Round Table for Louisiana Commodities, and the Knights of Columbus.

Jackie is married to Sue Theriot for 38 years. They have three children, Monique, Luke, and Jude. They are also the grandparents of four. They both enjoy traveling, having visited more than 35 countries in their life thus far, and also like to camp, boat and dance.

The American Sugar Cane League congratulates Jackie on being selected King Sucrose LXI.

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UP FRONT WITH THE LEAGUE

By Charlie Melancon

Mexico - Farm Bill - Fall Federal Election

There have been ongoing negotiations this year, which began in July, in an effort to resolve the existing sweetener dispute with Mexico. The issue has evolved from simply a "sugar" issue to a "sweetener" issue. Our government has been active in the negotiations with Mexico, and there is much that may have been, and is still being discussed that is not for public dissemination because the matter is still in negotiation. It, like all other matters that we deal with, is a process and takes time. It is firmly hoped that a resolve can be reached that ends this long standing uncertainty that has hung around far to long already.

In the meantime, I think it is important for you to know that we have had a four (4) man negotiating team that has spent a considerable amount of their personal time on the phone, in the air, and at the negotiating table trying to find a resolve to this disagreement. Their companies, families, and friends deserve our appreciation for the time spent away from home and business and on our industry's behalf. It has not been easy and it isn't over. But, I would like to thank those four gentlemen. Jackie Theriot, League Chairman; Don Carson, Vice President of Flo-Sun, Inc.; Jim Horvath, CEO of American Crystal Sugar, Co-op. Inc.; and Ray VanDriessche, immediate past President of the American Sugarbeet Growers Association. I appreciate their and the Washington-based ASA support people who have accompanied them for their dedication and hard work on our industry's behalf.

Farm Bill

The rules and regulation appertaining to the new Farm Bill and particularly, the Sugar program, have been long awaited. As I write this article on August 22, I have been notified that the "regs" will appear in the Federal Register on Monday, August 26, 2002. It is hoped that the regs will be posted to the Internet by Friday, August 23th. Having visited with the staff of USDA that handles the sugar program, I know of their efforts to try to process this information in as timely a manner as possible. The passage and signing of the Farm Bill was late in terms of being able to make planting and other decisions prior to this harvest. And for that, no one can be blamed. Again, it is a process and they must abide by all federal statutes that regulate that process. That takes time and surely has frustrated them. But, they got the job done and in advance of most other commodities. On behalf of the Louisiana sugar industry, I wish to thank Larry Walker, Dan Colacicco, Tom Bickerton, and their staff for their hard work.

Also, please understand that the FSA offices, state and local, are in the same situation as we. However, not only waiting for the "regs" and allotment announcement, but also waiting for the computer software, training and manuals that helps them operate the program work. Please be patient with all of these people. They are capable of getting up to speed quickly, but can't until they receive their marching orders and supplies. I thank the local offices for their continued assistance to our industry and Willie Cooper and his staff at the state level for their continued help and assistance that they provide to this industry.

Fall Federal Election

This Fall's reelection of our U.S. Representatives and Senator is upon us. We have been blessed in Louisiana with a supportive delegation from this great state. Every one of the incumbents seeking reelection has worked on our behalf and has supported our efforts in Washington. For that we are grateful. So, to our Congressional delegation up for reelection, Senator Mary Landrieu, David Vitter (R-1st), Bill Jefferson (D-2nd), Billy Tauzin(R-3rd), Jim McCrery (R-4th), Richard Baker (R-6th), and Chris John (D-7th), we thank you and wish you each good luck.

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WASHINGTON UPDATE

By Don Wallace

Breaux/TPA - Sugar Symposium - TRQ Announcement
USDA WASDE August Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

In the final hours of the contentious conference negotiations on the omnibus trade package (including Trade Promotion Authority, a trade adjustment assistance package and the Andean Trade Agreement), Senator John Breaux (D-LA) reached a compromise with House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas (R-CA) on the anti circumvention language.

The compromise modifies Chapter 17 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) to effectively close the "stuffed molasses" loophole via legislation. A continuous monitoring process is established that requires the Secretary of Agriculture and the Commissioner of Customs to monitor imports of sugar and sugar containing products under Chapters 17, 18, 19 and 21 of the HTS, excluding molasses imported for use in animal feed or the production of rum and articles prepared for marketing to consumers in the form and package in which imported. The Secretary and Commissioner are directed to pay close attention to the "high test molasses" category of imports during this process.

The Secretary and Commissioner must report their findings to Congress and the President every 6 months, including data and a description of developments and trends in the sugar import trade. Any indications of circumvention of tariff quotas are to be included, along with recommendations for ending such circumvention.

Senator Breaux once again proved himself a true champion and, when House resistance seemed strongest, the efforts of the entire Louisiana congressional delegation were critical in building House support for some sort of compromise on this issue. Louisiana's sugar producers were well served by their representatives in Washington.

Sugar Symposium

The 19th International Sweetener Symposium was held in early August near Albuquerque, New Mexico and was attended by some 350 participants. Various panels included discussions on the future of farm programs, trade promotion, vertical integration in the industry and the potential impact of Brazilian subsidies on US producers, to name a few. Senator John Breaux (D-LA) provided assurances to the participants that the recently approved trade bill sends a strong message to companies contemplating schemes to avoid US sugar import quota laws, as per the discussion above. Senator Breaux also spoke on the US Mexico sugar trade dispute, emphasizing that any sugar trade agreement between the two countries must involve the sugar industries of both nations. Deputy Assistant Trade Representative John Melle agreed that the private sector was an essential part of the process and that any agreement must have the support of the US and Mexican industries.

Congressman Charlie Stenholm (D-TX) told the attendees that the new farm bill gives the US a better bargaining position as trade liberalization talks resume. He described criticisms of the farm bill by national and foreign

press as "ridiculous" and said the bill enables US trade negotiators to work toward a level playing field for US producers. Stenholm cautioned that September will be an interesting month because of the confluence of budgetary pressures, agricultural appropriations votes and disaster relief efforts. While acknowledging that the US sugar policy is a "no net cost" program, making it difficult to take money out of the program, Stenholm stressed the need for sugar to help build coalitions and alliances in agriculture to ensure that the new farm bill does not get renegotiated in the appropriations process.

Rep. John Tanner (D-TN) said that agriculture has too often been sacrificed in trade talks and pledged to help change that situation. Tanner, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, stressed that the trade promotion authority provided to the President was not the end of legislative action and oversight over the negotiating process. Instead, Tanner indicated that Congress would be highly engaged in Geneva and other negotiating sessions around the world.

A panel of representatives from the US cotton, soybean and sugar industries also expressed concern that Brazil's government policies and practices make fair competition a difficult goal to attain, noting the tax breaks, low interest loans and low environmental standards that have encouraged acreage expansion in Brazil. Further, the devaluation of the Brazilian real allow Brazilian farm products to be artificially competitive in world markets, with one participant arguing that the devaluation has the effect of cutting labor costs by nearly 50 percent from 1992-93 levels. Dalton Yancey, outgoing chairman of the American Sugar Alliance, warned that Brazil's sugarcane ethanol subsidies have allowed the nation to build the world's largest sugar exporting machine. Bob Stallman, President of the American Farm Bureau Federation, urged caution when discussing the prospects for free trade with Brazil under the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations. According to Stallman, the AFBF agrees that the best way to address global agricultural distortions is in the WTO, rather than regional agreements.

TRQ Announcement

On July 30, USDA announced that the FY2003 TRQ for imports of raw cane sugar would be set at 1,231,497 short tons raw value (excluding the Mexican allocation to be announced later). Certificates of Quota Eligibility (CQE's) will be issued to Brazil, the Dominican Republic and the Phillippines to ship up to 25 percent of their respective allocations during each quarter of FY2003. Argentina, Australia, Guatemala and Peru will be allowed to ship up to 50 percent of their initial allocations in the first six months of FY2003.

USDA also established a refined sugar TRQ of 18,360 short tons raw value. This TRQ reflects our Uruguay Round commitments (22,000 metric tons) and an additional 15,000 metric tons for specialty sugars.

USDA WASDE August Report on US Sugar Supply and Use Released

The USDA released its August World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report for sugar supply and use. Projected U.S. sugar production for fiscal year 2002/03 dropped 275,000 short tons (raw value) to 8,365,000 short tons. 2001/02 production was reduced to 8,005,000 tons from 8,017,000 tons. Lower yields in Louisiana resulted in a 100,000 ton reduction in projected cane sugar production for 2002/03 to 4,090,000 tons, while 2001/02 production was dropped to 4,005,000, from 4,017,000 tons last month. Beet sugar production is projected at 4,275,000, down from July's 4,450,000 tons. For 2001/02 non program imports were unchanged at 80,000 and 2002/03 non program imports are unchanged at 60,000. The 2002/03 tariff rate quota projection of 1,222,000 was included, bringing total imports to 1,542,000 tons. 2001/02 cane sugar production in Louisiana is unchanged at 1,575,000 short tons, while 2002/03 production is reduced by 100,000 to 1,600,000. The amount of sugar held by CCC as of August 8, 2002, is lowered 42,000 tons to 218,000 tons. For 2001/02, the stocks to use estimate was increased dramatically from July's 16.0 percent to 17.2 percent. Ending stocks fell to 1,500,000 tons from 1,620,000 short tons last month.

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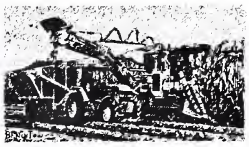

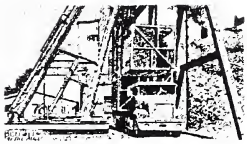

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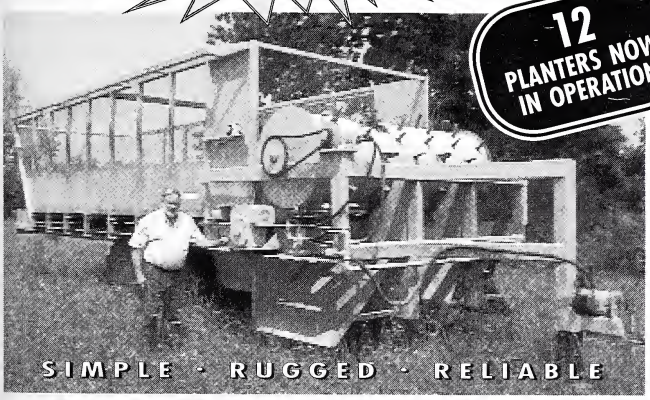

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ON THE FARM

By Windell Jackson

Planting - Variety Advancement Committee
Yields - Borer Situation

For many growers their 2002 planting was set to begin during the first week of August. However, for about a week and a half much of the cane belt has been receiving daily downpours. Because of these rains and nearly all of the cane belt being wet, very little cane has been planted. In addition, the rain has delayed the removal of soybeans, which are grown for harvest on fields to be planted in cane this year. For many, the rains and their planting labor arrived on the same day and in nearly the same hour.

At the writing of this article on August 16, only about one third of the acreage intended for planting in 2002 is planted. As usual, a few growers have finished planting, while others have not planted the first acre. With the daily rains, more cane is falling each day; however, most of the fields in the state remain erect at this time and are suitable for planting with whole stalk seed. Those who have planted cane mechanically are reporting that they are very pleased with their planting ratios. This limited information, from fields that were used for seed, suggests that the height and population for this year's crop are good. At the same time, these growers are indicating that nearly half of the stalk planted is flag (not hard joints). With the dry weather during June and July, growers were able to complete their land preparation, have their rows up, and are in good shape. Most fields that are to be planted have been sprayed and the grass either is dead or is in the process of dying. For these reasons, little work other than a light cultivation to remove some weeds will be needed.

Although harvest is looming and planting is not completed, it is still early. There is the possibility that if the rain continues, if more cane becomes lodged, or if the migrant labor leaves before planting is complete then the end of planting will be pushed back even farther. If this happens, more growers will complete their planting with billets. When planting dates for LCP 85-384 are compared for billet planted seed, it is good to know that the data from tests indicate that early planting is not necessarily the best. The data over the years indicate that in fields planted late with billeted seed, that when harvested the following year, yields were as good as the earlier planted fields.

In some cases where cane was harvested for seed, there are reports that the height of cane drops off drastically after the first quarter drain. Some growers question whether the drop in height is a result of the inability of LCP 85-384 to withstand "wet feet". When planted in fields of heavy soils, which are poorly drained, 85-384 does not grow well. Data collected by Dr. Sonny Viator, LSU AgCenter, Iberia Station, from this past harvest season supports this fact. In discussions with growers, many are now of the opinion that they will no longer try to keep cane (LCP 85-384) any older than second stubble in heavy soils.

Variety Advancement Committee

On August 8, 2002, the Variety Advancement Committee met in the office of the American Sugar Cane League. The '96 through the '01 selection series were discussed. In these six selection series there were slightly more than 140

active varieties. Varying amounts of information was available to be discussed for each variety. Such traits as yield potential (tonnage and TRS), disease and borer resistance, harvestability and fiber were considered while making decisions on the fate of varieties. About sixty varieties at various stages of the program were kept as active varieties for replanting in tests and for data collection during 2002. Of most noted interest to growers are the '96 and '97 series, for they contain the varieties HoCP 96-540 and L 97-128. HoCP 96-540 is on the secondary stations at this time and it was the wish of the committee (because of its high yields in sugar per acre), that it be replanted this fall. Second stubble data will be collected in Outfield tests in 2002, and if the variety continues to yield as well in comparison to LCP 85-384 it should be released to the growers in '03. It was also the wishes of the committee that the variety L 97-128 be distributed to the secondary stations this year. The variety has yielded exceptionally well in sugar per acre when compared to LCP 85-384. However, smut has been found in the variety in both test fields and on the primary increase stations. Because of its high yields and good harvestability in plant cane Outfield tests during the 2001 harvest, it is hoped that the amount of smut found in the variety will not become so great that it must be discarded before its possible release in '04.

The dropped variety Ho 95-988 was brought back to the active variety list. At the 1999 Variety Advancement Meeting, due to what was considered too much smut in test plots, the variety was dropped. At the request of the committee, yield data was collected in Outfield tests. In subsequent meetings, the variety remained dropped, but data was still collected. However, researchers have not found the levels of smut that was expected, but have found the variety to be a good stubbling variety. The variety offers a wide deviation from the variety gene pool that now dominates the breeding program. The pedigree of LCP 85-384 can be traced back to the basic breeding program; the pedigree of Ho 95-988, on the other hand, contains two other varieties from the basic program. With 85% of the state's acreage in 85 -384 many are fretting over the possibility that some new disease or a more virulent mutation of a disease now present could spread like "wild fire" throughout the cane industry and devastate the yields of 384. It is also feared that the susceptibility to the disease would be passed on to any offspring of LCP 85-384. Not only is 384 a prolific yielding and stubbling variety, it is just as prolific of a parent with a majority of any year's selections coming from a cross in which it was a parent.

It was the decision of the committee that Ho 95-988 be heat treated and then replanted in sufficient amounts on the primary stations so that it could possibly be sent to the secondary stations next year. In addition to treating to remove any RSD and Smut spores, the variety will be tested at Dr. Jeff Hoy's LSU AgCenter disease testing lab. Every effort is being made to insure that a sufficient and healthy supply of seed is available to the industry if the variety is released.

Yields

Height and growth measurements recorded at the USDA, ARS, Ardoyne Farm in Houma, LA indicate that this is an average crop. When asked to estimate the potential of this year's crop, the most common answer given by growers is, "nothing special just an average crop." What is an average crop? The state averaged 33.1 tons of cane per acre for the 2001 crop. If the yields (tons of cane per acre) for 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 are considered average, then an average crop would be 34 tons, and would indicate that this crop is somewhat better than last year's crop. One of the factors determining the amount of cane harvested for sugar this year will be the acreage used for seed. Historically about 7% of the crop each year is used for seed cane, but because of the increased number of acres planted with billeted seed, it was estimated that about 8% of the 2001 acreage was used as seed. As cane continues to lodge, and because of other factors, more acreage will be planted with billets again, meaning that this higher percentage of the state's crop for seed would apply. The acreage (sugar and seed) for the '02 crop is reported to be 485,350 acres. This acreage is 5,759 less and a 1.2% decrease from

he previous year. If a significant portion of this creage is replanted to cane then even a larger ercentage of the acreage could be used for seed.

Borer Situation

The following update on this year's borer ituation is provided by Drs. Dale Pollet & Gene Reagan, Department of Entomology, LSU Ag Center Research & Extension:

Early indicators appear to be correct in that high dead heart counts have led to a higher than usual borer population. Populations were moderate until the last of July when populations began to increase and expand into adjacent fields. Infestations moved into north Louisiana via the corn acreage as high infestations were noted in Tensas and Concordia cornfields. To date some sugarcane areas have sprayed more than last year and some are about normal while others are yet to spray. Fire ant populations and careful use of available products have assisted in the management of the population. If infestations and spraying continue, the total could approach or exceed one acre application, which would be the first time in several years.

The last couple of years, some blocks of sugarcane that were not harvested until late in the season have been heavily damaged by late borer infestations. In some blocks the losses have exceeded 30% and could have been avoided. Worst is the additional damage that is done to cane planted this year and the potential for damage to next year's crop. The spray schedules list the spray period as June 15th to September 15th. These have been the normal time periods for managing the borer populations. However, with the development of late season infestations, or conditions conducive to plant and borer development after September 15th, it has become necessary to make adjustments in the overall program. In discussing this situation with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture, we were permitted to extend the time when an application could be made as long as the pre harvest interval is maintained. Baythroid has a pre harvest interval of 15 days; Karate, Fury, and Asana 21 days; and Confirm 30 days. We can make an application to cane that will not be harvested until later in the season. Although this is not an absolute or broad spectrum recommendation, it is still an opportunity for a farmer to be able to make a late season decision that will affect his bottom line from several points:

- *Reduces the potential loss of cane and sugar from this crop*
- *Reduces the potential of borer emergence and infestation of plant cane or cane cut earlier for planting*
- *Reduces the potential for increased over wintering populations*
- *Reduces the potential for higher dead heart counts the following spring*
- *Could reduce populations for the following year*
- *Reduces the cost of spraying the following year*
- *Reduces pressure on predator populations by the reduction of sprays, allowing for increased predation and reduced cost*

Remember this is not a recommendation for broad spectrum application, but to manage a late season problem.

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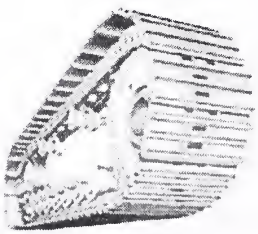

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ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

By James F. Coerver, P.E.
G.E.C., Inc.

Georgia Ruling Affects TMDL

A recent (July 2, 2002) ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit has put the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) situation in a much better light. While this ruling, related to a Sierra Club Lawsuit in Georgia that is similar to one filed in Louisiana, does not affect a "consent decree" requirement for U.S. EPA rather than the State of Georgia to designate TMDLs immediately, it overturns a "consent decree" requirement that EPA also prepare and promulgate immediately the "implementation plans" that must be in place before TMDLs can be "enforced." More importantly, the ruling says that Federal Courts do not now have the authority to require EPA to prepare such plans, and that Federal Law presently leaves the responsibility for developing such plans and implementing them with the state governments.

The TMDL provisions of the Clean Water Act have been a matter of great concern for agricultural interests (see *Sugar Bulletin* issues of January 2000, October 2000, November 2001, and June 2002). The major concern is that while the original waste load allocation programs were aimed exclusively at "point" sources of pollution such as municipal, industrial and institutional discharges, the newer program (TMDL) regulations were interpreted by Federal Courts to include "non-point" sources of pollution such as farms, forests, urban stormwater discharges and natural conditions such as stream bank erosion. This situation came about as the result of the Clinton Administration writing TMDL rules in defiance of expressed Congressional intent to the contrary. The EPA was then assisted by cooperative lawsuits in the Federal Courts by the Sierra Club against 41 states seeking to compel EPA to supercede state authority and responsibility in order to promulgate directly and immediately the TMDLs for all stream basins, even before the extensive scientific data necessary to make proper TMDL decisions can possibly be collected. Predictably, these lawsuits were mostly settled by "consent agreements" between the collaborating parties, leaving the various states stuck with unfair, unrealistic and unmanageable TMDL designations for achieving stream water quality standards that most likely are not attainable in the natural environment.

The major concern of agricultural interests is that once TMDLs are in place and enforceable, only actions specifically allowed by a state's implementation plan for a stream basin may occur there. In other words, if there was no allocation for harvesting a woodlands or for changing pasture land to row crops, such action could be stopped by nuisance lawsuits - the equivalent of private property seizure and control. Congress was aware of this devious scheme by EPA and its environmentalist constituency, and denied EPA authority to use appropriated funds for enforcement of TMDLs until after April 30, 2003, in order to allow time to develop TMDL regulations that are acceptable (assuming that is possible).

While the Congressional rein-in on EPA funding clearly delays any enforcement actions, EPA is proceeding with its Court derived authority to set TMDLs, and did so for the Ouachita River Basin of Louisiana on May 31, 2002. These Ouachita River Basin TMDLs are based on guess work and opinion rather than

scientific data, using untested models with no controls to allocate waste loads for meeting arbitrary stream standards that may actually be unattainable. While EPA cannot enforce until at least after April 30,2003, what is to stop nuisance lawsuits by environmentalists? That question is what makes the Court of Appeals decision in the Georgia case so significant. As the law now stands, enforcement will have to wait until state implementation plans are in place.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality recently prepared a general plan for addressing the state's non-point source water quality management problems. This plan relies on the cooperation of all interests, including agriculture, in developing voluntary and/or government subsidized actions to reduce non-point sources of pollution and to improve the quality of lakes, rivers, and bayous. This plan calls for development of basin implementation plans beginning in year 2003 and completing all before 2014. However, the plan assumes that funding will be available for all the necessary work, and in view of the high costs recently estimated by the Bush EPA Administration, this timetable may be overly optimistic. Furthermore, much time will be required to undo the incorrect TMDL designations EPA is now imposing by "consent decree." The environmentalist lawsuits have served only to delay clean-up, and to waste valuable resources that could have been used to help in the stream water quality improvement program.

It is most urgent that the cane sugar industry keep a close eye on this program. State officials want and need farmers cooperation in determining optimum farming practices and they can assist in obtaining funds for demonstration projects and land treatment measures. Farmer input is clearly essential in preparing workable and acceptable TMDL implementation plans. Furthermore, the industry must review very carefully upcoming revised EPA regulations pertaining to TMDL to make sure that the good work that can be accomplished is not sabotaged again, and keep our Congressional representatives informed of any threats to agricultural interests.

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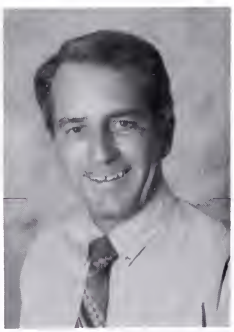

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MILLING AROUND

By Dr. Peter Rein
Audubon Sugar Institute
Louisiana State University AgCenter

The Optimum pH for Juice Clarification

Importance of pH in Clarification One of the parameters that the sugar mill processor can choose is the pH of limed juice. The pH has to be increased from the natural pH of cane juice, about 5.2 to 5.5, to a value close to or above 7 to neutralize the charge on the fine suspended material in the juice, so that it will coagulate and settle out. A number of chemical reactions occur too, the principal one being the precipitation of calcium phosphate, which aids clarification.

The decision on what limed juice pH to use is affected by a number of different issues. However, it is has serious implications, since it affects inversion losses in subsequent processing, color formation, loss of sugar in molasses, sugar quality and evaporator scaling. It is therefore a most important decision.

Generally there is a drop in pH from liming to clear juice, and a further drop in pH to evaporator syrup. This is normal, and is partly due to the slow reaction between calcium and phosphate in the juice. Part of the drop is due to undesirable chemical reactions, which are discussed here. Keeping retention times in clarifiers and the first few evaporator effects to a minimum helps to minimize these reactions.

Inversion Losses

Loss of sucrose by inversion to form reducing sugars is promoted by high temperatures and low pH values. Thus, most of the loss by inversion will take place in the clarifiers and in the first and second effects of the evaporators. The effect of both temperature and time is exponential, so the rate of reaction increases rapidly as the pH drops below 7 and the temperature rises above 200°F. There is not much that can be done to change the temperatures at which the clarifier and evaporators operate, but the pH can be manipulated to keep the loss of sucrose by inversion to a minimum.

Work done at Cora Texas, reported at the last ASSCT meeting in Florida (Eggleston et al. 2002a) concluded that the clear juice pH should be kept in the range 7.0 to 7.2. Compared to a clarified pH of 6.5, as is common in Louisiana, the Cora Texas work showed that on average the sugar loss in the pre evaporators only could be reduced by about 0.5%; this loss is even higher at the beginning of the season.

It is important to remember too, that the pH of juice measured once it has been cooled to room temperature is significantly higher than that at high temperature. Work done by Schaffler (1987) showed that mixed juice at over 212°F has a pH value 0.5 to 1 unit lower than at room temperature. This should be borne in mind when tables are used to estimate inversion losses.

Work at Cora Texas mill also showed that inversion losses are lower with hot liming than cold liming (Eggleston et al. 2002). The loss with cold liming was estimated at 1.5% and the loss with hot liming 0.8%.

Juice Quality

If insufficient lime is added, i.e. the pH is too low, poor settling and high juice turbidity will be experienced. There are, of course, other factors that affect juice turbidity, e.g. phosphate content. However, the effect of high juice turbidity is poorer sugar quality, or alternatively the consequence is a need to wash up the sugar more intensively in the centrifugals, leading to lower exhaustions and increased circulation in the pan house.

Quantity of Lime Required

A higher pH will require slightly more lime to be used. However, what has a much larger effect is the organic acid loading in the juice. Organic acids originate from entrained wash water, or from degradation reactions in the milling train. A high organic acid loading substantially increases the quantity of lime required to achieve a given clear juice pH. It also has other undesirable effects, such as increased evaporator scaling (Doherty et al. 1999). Excessive calcium is also implicated in massecuites that are difficult to boil. In these cases, partial neutralization by soda ash may be the best option; this is currently being investigated at Audubon Sugar Institute.

Color Formation

At very high pH values, the reducing sugars, fructose and glucose, decompose to form colorants and other impurities. This has often been used as a reason to keep the pH down. However, this really only becomes an issue when the pH rises above 8 (Honig, 1953). In Louisiana, juice color is generally low, and high sugar colors are rarely a problem. The molasses surveys done over the last two years in Louisiana have shown that the reducing sugar content, even with immature cane, is no higher than that experienced in other sugar industries of the world.

Color formation can also be reduced by converting from cold to hot liming (Eggleston et al. 2002).

Evaporator Scaling

Higher pH values lead to higher calcium contents in clear juice. This may be thought to be the cause of scaling in the evaporators. However, higher pH values lead to lower values of phosphate and silica, which are also implicated in evaporator scaling. In particular, silica scales are the most difficult to remove, and a somewhat higher pH will in fact show benefit in terms of reduced silica scales. Overall evaporator scaling is probably less severe if the clear juice pH is kept above 7.

The effect of pH on some of the impurities implicated in scaling is well illustrated in Figure 1 below, taken from the classic on clarification (Honig, 1953).

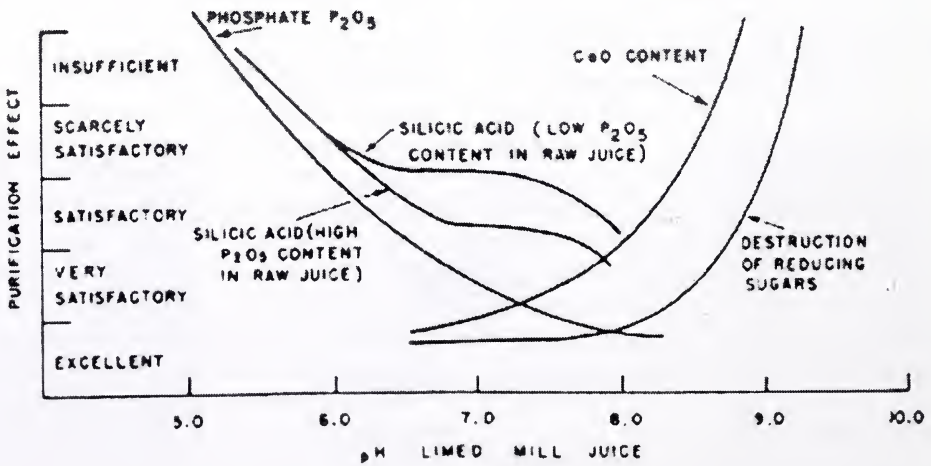

Figure 1. Effect of pH on the effectiveness of clarification and concentration of impurities (Honig 1953).

Loss of Sugar in Molasses

The impurity content of clear juice influences the quantity of molasses produced, and hence the loss of sugar in molasses. However, good clarification leads to maximum removal of impurities, and whatever conditions lead to good clarification are likely to minimize loss of sugar in molasses.

Effect on acidic condensates in the evaporators

At lower pH values, organic acids in the juice are more easily volatilized. It has been shown in the Audubon Sugar Institute labs that if the juice pH drops below 6.3, the pH of the condensate drops significantly (Saska 2002), which has been found in the past to lead to serious corrosion of condensate piping systems. This can be eliminated by keeping the pH level higher, and of course by reducing the loading of organic acids in the juice. This requires the halting of cane washing and, when washing is essential, that the quality of the wash water is carefully watched.

Norms for Clear Juice pH in Other Sugar Industries

It is common in South Africa to aim for a clear juice pH of 7.0 to 7.2. This is consistent with recommendations of Eggleston et al (2002a). In Australia, juice is limed to a pH of 7.8 (Doherty 1999) giving a clear juice pH of around 7.5.

These values are considerably higher than the average in Louisiana of about 6.5. It is likely that if the clear juice pH is raised to above 7.0, benefits in terms of reduced losses, better clarification and perhaps less severe scaling of evaporators will be achieved.

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Combine Forward Speed and Cane Quality at Alma Plantation during 2001

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If the excellent cane quality discussion at the 2002 Contact committee meeting is an indication of what this industry thinks about this topic, it's obvious that this is a major issue. The Louisiana sugarcane industry appears to be on the move toward improving this aspect through careful harvest, transport and milling management. Although progress will likely be slow and take on different features, the importance of cooperation within the industry must be emphasized and encouraged. It's not certain where we are on the "learning curve," but if the long term goal of improving the efficiency of this industry remains foremost, short term efforts should produce benefits in the process.

Cane quality has always been an important element of the Louisiana sugarcane industry. It's easy to forget that many practices like weed and borer control, ripener usage and good cultural practices are well established to improve cane quality, since these operations are almost routine. Although there are certain things that are out of our control, like weather and harvest conditions, learning how to adjust under certain circumstances becomes the greatest challenge to management. Learning how to best utilize the equipment and technology available to economically deliver cane of acceptable quality during a "normal" harvest season is top priority for improved efficiency. The huge capital outlay needed to purchase harvest equipment, transport units and cane systems at mills to accommodate billets has taken several years to stabilize.

In an effort to improve cane quality, now that the industry has generally retooled to handle billets, a significant focus is the proper operation of combine harvesters. Elements such as blade maintenance and settings, extractor fan speed and forward speed have been studied. This article will concentrate on information obtained during a harvest study conducted to help determine the influence of a combine's forward speed on the quality of cane delivered. Alma Plantation in Lakeland, LA agreed to participate in weekly harvest trials throughout the 2001 harvest season. While two harvesters are used to cut the farm's daily quota of approximately 1000 tons, there was an interest in knowing if cane quality would be significantly improved by operating an additional harvester to cut this same daily quota at a slower ground speed. Among the questions considered to be important in this test were: Does it pay to have an additional harvester and operate at a slower forward speed? At a slower forward speed, is cane quality improved enough to justify the additional expense incurred?

Weekly trials were conducted with a 2000 model 7700 Austoft Combine Harvester cutting LCP 85-384. The same harvester operator kept the extractor fan speed set at 900 – 950 rpm in

burned cane and 1100 rpm in green cane. The ground speed of the harvester was held at 1.5, 2.5, 3.5 and 4.5 mph. These treatments were monitored each time with a hand-held radar unit to ensure accurate ground speed. One truckload (approximately 24 tons) was cut at each speed each week and delivered to the mill to be weighed and sampled using a core sampler for 12 consecutive weeks. Core sample analyses were used to determine such quality factors as lbs. sugar/ton cane, sediment and fiber % cane.

An acreage wheel was used to determine the row feet needed to complete each load. Using this information and the net weight of cane, tons cane/acre were determined. The lbs. sugar/acre were calculated by multiplying tons cane/acre by lbs. sugar/ton cane. The cane supply that the farm was harvesting at the time each test was run was used. Data was collected each week in an attempt to get a true season-long comparison of the ground speed treatments. No attempts were made to choose test fields according to variety, green or burned, straight or lodged cane, ground conditions or any other factors, but notes were taken to try to categorize the cane supply each week.

Extraneous matter (% trash) determinations for each speed were measured by weighing billet samples with and without trash. Before wagon loads were dumped, billet samples were collected and gross weight recorded. After leaves, tops, soil, roots and any other non-cane material were separated, the net billet samples were again weighed. The proportion of extraneous matter to millable cane is expressed as the % trash of delivered loads.

Statistical analysis of the data was accomplished using The Agricultural Research Management (ARM) Software. Mean separation using Duncan's New Multiple Range Test at $p = 0.05$ level of significance is reported. Economic analysis of the data using variable harvest cost estimates as established by LSU Dept. of Ag Economics was performed to help answer the question of whether the gains in cane quality justified additional expenses incurred.

Results

The yield results and cane quality data as an average of 12 tests (5 green and 7 burned) recorded throughout the 2001 harvest season at Alma Plantation are presented in Table1. The yield of tons of cane per acre was significantly less when the combine was operated at 2.5 and 1.5 mph as compared to 3.5 and 4.5 mph. The yield of pounds of sugar per ton of cane was only higher in the 1.5 mph treatment as compared to the 4.5 mph treatment. It is interesting to note that there was no significant difference in the resulting yield of pounds of sugar per acre between the treatments. Although fiber % cane was significantly higher in the 4.5 mph as compared to all other treatments, sediment readings were not significantly different for any of the treatments.

Table 2 reports the average % trash for each speed during five weeks (2 green and 3 burned) of the 2001 harvest season at Alma Plantation. The 4.5 mph treatment had the highest % trash and the largest difference between gross and net delivered yield, whereas the 1.5 mph treatment had the lowest % trash and the smallest difference between gross and net delivered yield. The highest net yield was recorded in the 3.5 mph treatment.

Table 3 reports the variable harvest cost per acre for operating a combine harvest system at the different mph settings, the calculated acres harvested per hour and the average time needed to harvest a load for each treatment. A threefold increase in the variable harvest cost per acre and the average time needed to harvest a load is shown between the 4.5 mph and 1.5 mph treatments. These factors are obstacles to adopting the slower forward speed in most commercial harvest operations in Louisiana.

Summary

Forward speed of the combine harvester had a significant influence on delivered yield and cane quality in this study. This work demonstrates that combine harvesters are capable of delivering higher quality LCP 85-384 by reducing forward speed, but a drastic reduction in harvest rates and an unacceptable increase in the variable harvest costs are likewise shown. Although no significant differences in sugar per acre yields are reported, important

considerations, specific to the Louisiana industry, are brought to light. Our short harvest season demands a harvest and delivery system of high cane volume at an economical cost. The real challenge is to accomplish this task while maintaining cane quality. The significance of reducing delivered tons while not significantly affecting the yield of sugar per acre could be an important factor in determining the benefits of improved cane quality in Louisiana. Reduced trash % cane should reduce transport costs and improve sugar extraction, but these elements must be quantified. In this test, the increase in variable harvest cost with no significant difference in sugar per acre yield, illustrates that the present system does not encourage growers to increase cane quality by reducing the forward speed of combines during harvest. Additional adjustments in fan speed and forward speed as well as combine improvements are likely to continue to enhance cane quality when the proper economic incentives are determined.

Table 1. Yield results and cane quality data as an average of 12 tests recorded during the 2001 harvest season at Alma Plantation (7 Burned and 5 Green).

Treatment	Cane Yield (tons/acre)	Core TRS (Lbs./ton)	Sugar Yield (Lbs./acre)	Fiber % cane	Sediment
4.5 mph	42.2 a	199.3 b	8406 a	18.0 a	4.6 a
3.5 mph	42.1 a	206.0 ab	8531 a	16.2 b	2.5 a
2.5 mph	39.4 b	210.3 ab	8325 a	15.6 b	2.4 a
1.5 mph	37.2 b	217.0 a	8283 a	14.9 b	1.7 a

Means followed by the same letter do not significantly differ (P=0.05, Duncan's New MRT)

Table 2. Trash % in delivered yields recorded during the 2001 harvest season at Alma Plantation (3 Burned and 2 Green).

Treatment	Gross Yield (Tons/Acre)	% Trash	Net Yield (Tons/Acre)
4.5 mph	40.8 a	12.3 a	35.8 a
3.5 mph	40.6 a	8.9 b	37.0 a
2.5 mph	36.5 a	8.0 b	33.6 a
1.5 mph	35.9 a	2.7 c	35.0 a

Means followed by the same letter do not significantly differ (P=0.05, Duncan's New MRT)

Table 3. Variable harvest cost per acre as applied to harvest data recorded during the 2001 harvest season at Alma Plantation.

Treatment	Harvest Cost* ($/Acre)	Acres / Hour	Minutes per Load
4.5 mph	51	2.45	10
3.5 mph	65	1.91	13
2.5 mph	91	1.36	21
1.5 mph	152	.82	36

* Variable harvest cost assuming 75% efficiency

Dedicated Research Funding Summaries

Scientists who receive funding from the League's Dedicated Research Committee are requested to prepare a short summary of their work at the end of the year. Those reports will be published each month until all of them have been printed. The following are reports from research during the year 2001.

Assessment of Louisiana Sugarcane Varieties against the Mexican Rice Borer. T.E. Reagan, Professor, Dept of Entomology LAES/LSU AgCenter Baton Rouge, LA, Benjamin L. Legendre, Specialist, Sugar Research Station, LCES/LSU AgCenter, Baton Rouge, LA, Jose Amador, Center Director, Texas A&M University Research and Extension, Weslaco, TX 78596

During the Fall of 2000, a cooperative experiment was planned at the Texas A&M (Weslaco) Research Station to evaluate Louisiana varieties (see attached report); and an additional sugarcane planting was initiated near Ganado in Jackson County during the Fall of 2001. End of season stalk destruction will be used to determine MRB larval boring, in addition to two visits to monitor infestations during the season. The varieties being evaluated are LCP85 384, HoCP91 555, HoCP85 845, and CP70 321 compared to the MRB susceptible standard NCo 310. The Ganado location has the additional experimental variety HoCP96 540. Appropriate analysis of variance and means separation will be conducted on the data.

During 2001, cooperative studies continued with the LSU AgCenter and Texas A&M Research Stations at Beaumont and Weslaco involving extensive pheromone trapping of Mexican Rice Borer (*Eoreuma loftini*) moths. Working closely with county agricultural extension agents in the Texas rice belt and in the western Louisiana sugarcane region, and supported by personnel of the Texas and Louisiana Departments of Agriculture, the rice borer was shown to extend its range into two additional Texas counties (Harris and Austin).

Trapping efforts around the Beaumont sugarcane (ca. 1,000 acres), in western Louisiana, and near St. Mary and Iberia parish sugarcane factories receiving sugarcane from East Texas failed to detect the presence of rice borers. However, with the discovery of the rice borer in the Houston area, the species is now within 50 miles of sugarcane being transported for processing in the central portion of the Louisiana sugarcane industry.

Evaluation of four Louisiana sugarcane varieties for relative susceptibility to the Mexican rice borer conducted by T.E. Reagan and B.L. Legendre are shown in the following Table. Even though the cane was never stressed (irrigated at least every two weeks), varieties HoCP 91 555 and LCP 85 384 were significantly ($P<0.05$) more than twice as bored as HoCP 85 845. The traditionally rice borer susceptible NCo 310 showed an immediate level of injury.

Developing Integrated Weed Management Systems for Efficient Sugarcane Production. Edward P. Richard, Jr., Research Agronomist, USDA-ARS, SRRC, Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA

A total of 25 field experiments relating to this project were conducted during the 2000/2001 growing season. Most of these studies dealt with weed control (johnsongrass, bermudagrass, itchgrass, and morningglory). Included in these experiments were evaluations of CGA 362622, Spartan/ Authority, Command, Milestone, Valor, and Velpar (K4) for use in sugarcane.

The key to controlling perennial weeds in the crop is to eliminate them from the fallow field prior to planting and to insure their control at planting and again in the plant-cane growing season. Mixtures of Arsenal or Velpar with Karmex or Cadre were applied to fallow fields and have shown promise for the residual control of both bermudagrass and johnsongrass. This research has stimulated the

interest of the manufacturers, BASF and DuPont, to pursue labeling of these treatments. Many o the newer herbicides being evaluated in sugarcane (CGA 362622 and Valor) are primarily targete at the control of weeds in Roundup-Ready crops that Roundup is relatively weak on lik morninglories and nutsedge. Mixtures of these herbicides with Roundup are being evaluated i fallowed fields to try to improve the level of total weed control; something that has not be attainabl with Roundup plus 2,4-D mixtures. In addition CGA 362622 has shown some postemergence activit on rhizome johnsongrass and itchgrass. When applied in combination with Asulox, this mixture i especially effective in controlling mature plants of these weeds even when the rate of Asulox i reduced.

Fall and spring removal dates for the combine-generated residues were evaluated during the 2000 2001 growing season in Iberia, Lafourche, and St. James Parishes. In these experiments, physica removal (brushing, mowing, and burning) in the fall after the harvest of plant-cane and first-stubbl crops of LCP 85-384 and in the spring was compared to no removal and the use of fall applie materials which reportedly can enhance the natural decomposition of plant materials by soil microbes On average, about 25% of the litter was naturally decomposed between December and March 1 None of the "spray on treatments" accelerated this rate of breakdown. The older stubble crop appear to be the ones most affected by the residue and fall removals immediately after harves continue to result in higher yields than the no removal or winter (Feb./Mar.) removals. Varieta responses to the presence of mulch on the first-stubble crop were explored in a study at the Ardoyn Research Farm in Terrebonne Parish. The responsibility for all of the post-harvest residue studie have been assumed by the SRU's cultural practice's researcher, Dr. Richard Johnson.

Yellow Leaf Syndrome Transmission Studies with the Sugarcane Aphid (Continuing). Willia H. White, Research Entomologist, Michael P. Grisham, Research Plant Pathologist, USDA-ARS, SRRC Sugarcane Research Unit, Houma, LA

A protocol was developed that can be used to maintain colonies of the sugarcane aphid fo experimentation. A plexiglass structure was designed that protects the aphids from parasites while supporting good plant growth. The greenhouse where the experiments are conducted was modified so temperatures that support colonization of the aphids could be maintained. Experiments were conducted to determine the minimal numbers of insects to establish a colony and to transmit the virus. Initial experiments successfully demonstrated usefulness of the protocol for conducting host/ disease/vector relationship experiments. The protocol will continue to be modified/improved as other experiments are conducted to determine varietal differences in susceptibility to aphid colonization and virus infection.

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EFFECT OF GIBBERELLIC ACID[1] ON SUGARCANE YIELDS IN LOUISIANA

W.B. Hallmark and G.J. Williams
Iberia Research Station
and
Benjamin Legendre and G.L. Hawkins
St. Gabriel Research Station
and Sugar Research Station

Introduction

Gibberellic acid is a plant growth hormone involved in stem elongation in plants. Anecdotal data from Florida indicate that gibberellic acid may increase sugarcane yields by increasing stalk length. The distributors of PRO-15 PLUS (a 0.025% formulation of gibberellic acid marketed in Florida and Louisiana) contend that their product activates the enzyme and hormone systems in plants, which are essential for normal plant growth and reproduction. PRO-15 PLUS is formulated with 15% sulfur derived from liquid ammonium thiosulphate, which is said to provide nutrients for healthier roots, stronger stems, longer stalks, and improved plant performance.

The research reported in this article was initiated to determine whether the use of PRO-15 PLUS could increase sugarcane yields in Louisiana.

Materials and Methods

The first study was in Iberia Parish with Mike Landry (Westover Farms), and it ran for four years. This study was initiated in the spring of 1998 using second-progeny Kleentek variety LCP 85-384 plant cane. The six treatments used in the study are given in Table 1. The gibberellic acid rates of formulated material used were 0.5 qt/A (0.5x), 1.0 qt/A (1.0x), and 2.0 qt/A (2.0x). The PRO-15 PLUS treatments were applied in 10 gallon/A of water along with a surfactant (1.5 pint of 820 surfactant per 100 gallons of water) using a high-clearance sprayer. The first application of gibberellic acid was sprayed directly over the top of the cane, while the second and third applications were sprayed over the top and to the sides of the cane. Application dates for the treatments in each of the four years are given in Table 1. Because of lodged cane, treatments 4 and 6 did not receive gibberellic acid in 1999 at the third application date (August 24).

The experimental design used in the first study was a Latin square with six replications. Experimental plots consisted of three 5.8-ft. by 50-ft. rows with a 10-ft. alley at the ends of the plots. All plots were separated on both sides by three 5.8-ft. by 50-ft. border rows. The cane was grown to maturity each of the four years using recommended fertilizer rates and standard cultural

[1] Research was partially supported by PRO-CHEM, the marketers of PRO-15 PLUS.

practices. Glyphosate (Polado-L) was not applied as a cane ripener in any of the four years that the test was grown. All plots were harvested in 1998, 1999, and 2000 with a two-row soldier harvester and weighed with a hydraulic load cell mounted on a tractor. The test was harvested in 2001 (the center row of the three-row plots) with a combine harvester and weighed directly in a field wagon equipped with load cells. A 10-stalk sample was randomly taken at harvest from each plot to determine stalk weight and commercially recoverable sugar (CRS) per ton of harvested cane. Plant height was determined for this 10-stalk sample in 1998, 1999, and 2001. Plant populations were also measured before harvest each year.

The second field study was conducted with fourth-stubble variety LCP 85-384 at Alma Plantation, Lakeland, La. PRO-15 PLUS was applied on June 25, 2001 at 1 qt/A using a highboy sprayer in a 15-gallon spray mixture per acre and at 2 qt/A on July 27, 2001 by airplane in a 5- gallon spray mixture per acre. A surfactant and a no-drift product were included with each application to ensure proper coverage.

The second study was comprised of only two treatments: a split application of the gibberellic acid and an untreated check serving as the control. The field was arranged in a randomized complete block design with three replications. Each plot consisted of 30 rows (180 ft. wide and three blocks deep), or approximately 8.0 acres. Sugarcane was cultivated and fertilized according to recommended practices; insecticide was applied as required. Glyphosate (Polado-L) was applied by airplane at 6 oz (0.2 lb/A) on October 22, 2001, to the total area in a 5-gallon mixture per acre. The interior 16-18 rows of each plot, or approximately 6.0 acres, were harvested by a combine harvester on December 10 and 11 of 2001. All cane from each plot was weighed by the Alma Factory's truck scale and the weight recorded. Each of the approximately 10-12 trucks of cane harvested from each plot was sampled by the cane/press method of analysis to determine the yield of theoretical recoverable sugar (TRS) per ton of cane. From these data, the yield of cane per acre and yield of theoretical recoverable sugar per acre (TRS/A) were calculated.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows that the gibberellic acid treatments (Table 1) used in the first study did not significantly (P$0.05, 95% confidence level) affect the six sugarcane yield variables measured (average values for four years) in the study.

Yield data for the second study (fourth-stubble crop) treated with gibberellic acid are shown in Table 3. Application of gibberellic acid failed to (P$0.05, 95% confidence level) increase cane yields significantly, yield of theoretical recoverable sugar (TRS) per ton of cane, or sugar yield (TRS/A). Unlike in study #1, there was not even a numerical increase in sugarcane yields with the use of gibberellic acid.

Conclusion

Use of PRO-15 PLUS gibberellic acid in five site-years of sugarcane research in Louisiana failed to increase sugarcane yields. We are, therefore, not able to recommend its use in Louisiana.

Table 1. Gibberellic acid rates and application timing for four years in study #1.

T#	For 1998[+]	For 1999	For 2000	For 2001
1	SUL-15 not applied			
2	1.0x SUL-15 applied on: 4/9	5/7	4/6	5/16
3	1.0x SUL-15 applied on: 4/9, 5/22	5/7, 6/24	4/6, 5/31	5/16, 7/16, 8/21
4	1.0x SUL-15 applied on: 4/9, 5/22, 7/6	5/7, 6/24, 8/24~	4/6, 5/31, 7/21	5/16, 7/16, 8/21
5	0.5x SUL-15 applied on: 4/9, 5/22, 7/6	5/7, 6/24, 8/24	4/6, 5/31, 7/21	5/16, 7/16, 8/21
6	2.0x SUL-15 applied on: 4/9,5/22, 7/6	5/7, 6/24, 8/24~	4/6, 5/31, 7/21	5/16, 7/16, 8/21

[+] The 0.5x, 1.0x, and 2.0x rates denote gibberellic acid rates of 0.5, 1.0, and 2.0 qt/A, respectively, for each of the indicated dates.
~ The August 24 application was not applied on these two treatments in 1999 because the cane was lodged.

Table 2. Effect of gibberellic acid treatments on sugarcane yield variables averaged across the four harvest years for study #1.

T#	Stalk weight	Plant pop.	Plant[+] height	CRS[*]	Cane yield	Sugar yield
	lb/stalk	1000/A	ft.	lb/T	T/A	lb/A
1	1.84	52.1	8.58	217	38.9	8440
2	1.90	52.4	8.54	221	39.5	8650
3	1.92	51.4	8.52	222	39.5	8720
4	1.93	51.5	8.58	223	38.5	8520
5	1.82	51.6	8.40	221	38.8	8560
6	1.83	53.1	8.59	227	39.9	8980
LSD 0.05	NS[‡]	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

[+] Plant height is based on the averages of three years:1998, 1999, and 2001.
[‡] NS denotes that the treatments did not affect the indicated yield variables at the designated significance level. This means that we are not 95% sure that the treatment means are different.
[*] CRS = Commercially Recoverable Sugar.

Table 3. Effect of gibberellic acid treatment on sugarcane yields in study #2.

Treatment	Cane yield	TRS[*]	TRS
	T/A	lb/T	lb/A
Control	40.2	228	9,160
Gibberellic acid	39.2	225	8,830
LSD 0.05	NS	NS	NS

[*] TRS = Theoretical Recoverable Sugar; NS = Non Significant at $P \leq 0.05$.

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